RIDE BUDDY –(289PG)

Games of the Dead

BY JESSE DAVID TRIPP

New chapters /added bonus material included

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SUPREME Y/A EDITION

(FINAL EDITION)

Bonus Material - INCLUDED TWO-FULL RAP SONGS-

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mild violence and mild language-(light- gore) HIP HOP HORROR …..

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The Last Normal Friday/pep rally

Jason wants to be a rapper after the really and rejects a great college offer and Mrs T. does not agree with the decision even takes his car keys---------
The final bell at West Ridge High didn't ring. It screamed. echoed down the well built vintage halls of historically black highschool, the kids called the beast, slang nick name given to a big old stable structure going back to the days of civil rights leaders, thing had some renovations but mostly old dusty relics from the past .

The old speaker crackled with static before a loud metallic shriek echoed through every hallway.

"Eeeeeeeeee..."

Students froze.

Then the principal's voice returned, Dr. Cynthia Fulgore The rudest principle ever .

"...Sorry about that, ok so we have a surprise i think . Have a safe weekend." oh , wait dont forget about the pep ralley friday,its going to big zdogs, the schoolmascot.

we have special musical guess , rapper cash grill, and the plenty money boys will be here. The p.o.m.b will be here live for you alls enjoyment the test scores are are up I promised i would do something big for you all. Tell your mom and bring a friend," she said cheerfully, unlike her often strict personality.

The halls exploded into noise, excitement, loud and audacious.

"Lame!" somebody yelled in the back ground , while must buzzed with interest. " we don't care about **p.o.m.b** we want some money lady" another guy screamed.

Lockers slammed and people crowded the exit near the bus . Teens danced , twerked and others simply locked up their books and went home, the day was hot and zesty more so than natural. Youthful funk filled the big yellow bus prompting some of black teens to open windows on hot summer day.

"cash grill is coming , ooh he is cute" one girl said putting her books in the locker." Tina thought everybody was cute, even the hustlers next to the jailhouse.

"Cute if you into deep sea fish looking brothers, he is not not for me girl no "no way i like pretty men.

Sneakers squeaked across polished floors. nikes, pumas boots and

sandals . Fade the most popular basketball player grabbed a peopl rally flyer off the old painted wall next to the trophy case and folded it up, he looked interested, and when fade was interested everybody was interested. Tina and the others started grabbing the flyers.

Everybody was laughing, yelling, recording TikToks, arguing over basketball, and trying to beat the buses.

Jason shrugged, grabbed his backpack, and followed his friend through the hallway.

Music leaked from somebody's headphones. “boom boom boom “ the melody faded as he passed by, a familiar site at this over croweded school some saw as a prison.

Girls practiced dance moves in front of trophy cases. Stopped immediately, by lame hall monitors dedicated to a free job. Nerds who badly needed extra credit.

The football team crowded around the vending machine.

Everybody wanted to get home.

Everybody except Mr. Wilson.

The history teacher stood outside his classroom with his arms crossed.

"hey you come over here !"

Terrell sighed.

"Man...what now?"

"You still owe me two pages on Reconstruction of civil law "

"I reconstructed enough." he said laughing

"You reconstructed excuses." he had an equal since of humor many said he was the funniest teacher around

Jason laughed.

Mr. Wilson pointed.

"You laughing too."

"I ain't even in your class." you might be next year punk

"You guilty by association."

"That's illegal."

"It should be." they all laughed

Terrell leaned toward Jason.

"See? That's why I like him. He roast people professionally."

"You still failing."

"...Never mind."

They walked away laughing.

Outside, the September sun lit up the campus. It was like a cinematic movie only blacker.

Cars lined the student parking lot. Some new some rattled.

Basketballs bounced on the outdoor courts.

Fresh-cut grass mixed with the smell of cheap school pizza from the cafeteria vents.

West Ridge High looked ordinary.

Normal.

Safe.

At least it tried to.

A skinny freshman suddenly sprinted across the courtyard screaming. “im outta here as he sprinted to the bus that waited with a open door, and a driver who looked ready to go home.

In the lobby a motion was stirring while people gathered around fade.

"IT MOVED!"

Everybody looked. confused “what you talkin bout” one guy joked in the

back ground

"What moved?" “your hairline?”

“not a joke the” "The statue!"

Students burst into laughter. “man you are high no wonder why you got kept back in your last grade”

"The zombie bulldog !"

"The mascot?"

"It blinked!"

A senior shook his head. “man fade been hit too many times on the football field.”

"Freshmen weird."

Another student yelled,

"You been eating cafeteria meat again?"

More laughter. not a care what was sade about the old bronze mascot the haunted the halls of the campus.

The frightened freshman pointed toward the bronze zombie statue in front of the school.

It stood perfectly still.

Exactly where it had always been.

Jason looked at it anyway.

"...You ever notice its eyes?" maybe an omen

Terrell rolled his own.

"Bro..."

"They look different."

"They literally made outta metal."

Jason shrugged.

"I know."

Still...

For just a split second...

He could've sworn the zdog wasn't looking toward the football field anymore.

It looked at him.

Hot girl, Maya cc Johnson caught up with them.

She carried three books all the subjects she frequently failed at , headphones around her neck, and always looked like she knew something everybody else didn't.

She wasn't the loudest person.

She wasn't the quietest either.

She noticed things. She was hot it didnt matter how wrong she was when she spoke.

"You two waiting on the bus?" she said popping her lips and adding gloss. She loved Terrell didnt care much for jason he was creepy to her .

"Nah," Terrell said.

"My cousin picking me up."

Jason nodded.

"My mama working late."

Maya looked toward the statue.

"...Y'all hear what happened this morning?"

"What?"

"The janitor quit."

"They always quit." “what’s the big deal about some cooky janitor quitting”

"No."

She lowered her voice.

"He said somebody was inside the gym before sunrise."

"So?"

"The cameras never showed anybody."

Jason smiled.

"You trying to scare us?"

"I ain't trying."

Terrell laughed.

"You watch too many horror movies."

Maya shrugged.

"Maybe."

"But?"

"He kept saying..."

She paused. staring into a hand hell mirror fixing her braids one by one .

"...he heard somebody humming."

Jason smirked.

"Humming?"

"Old church songs."

Terrell burst out laughing. “man im done”

"So...the ghost love gospel?"

"I'm serious."

Jason laughetoo.

"Ghost trying to get saved." “we about to be baptized” he said before laughing.

The three nearly fell over laughing.

Chapter Three – Dreams and Dead Ends

The smell of baked macaroni, fried chicken, and lemon furniture polish floated through the Solid four bed room home.

Mrs. Tanya—known to everybody on the block as Mrs. T—sat proudly at the kitchen table wearing her reading glasses. An expensive cream-colored envelope rested in front of her. she had just showered and felt great.

Jason leaned against the refrigerator pretending not to care.

“wassup ma what’s on the menu”

His older brother Carlos stood nearby stealing chicken wings off a plate. “chicken i can answer that” carlos added

Mrs. T smiled so wide her cheeks hurt. “my my my im impressed.”:

"You know," she said, clearing her throat dramatically, "I been waiting eighteen years to open one of these."

Jason laughed.

"Mama, just read it."

Carlos grabbed another wing. before pouring some lemonade into a large nba gulper cup.

"Read it before I eat everything. This chicken got a scholarship too."

Mrs. T pointed a finger. “stop playing you too silly”

"Carlos... if one more wing disappear, your scholarship gonna disappear."

Carlos slowly put the wing back.

"...I respect the process."

Jason chuckled.

Mrs. T carefully unfolded the letter.

"'Dear Mr. Jason Brooks. Congratulations...'"

She stopped.

Covered her mouth.

"Oh my Lord..."

Jason frowned.

"What?"

She looked at him with watery eyes.

"You got in!" “oh lord you got in!”

Jason blinked.

"What?"

"You got into Hampton University."

Carlos exploded.

"LET'S GO!"

He tackled Jason into a hug.

"My little brother smart!"

Jason laughed while trying to breathe.

"Man... get off me!"

Mrs. T stood up crying.

"Baby... first person in this family going to college."

She hugged Jason so hard his feet nearly left the floor.

"I knew God had something special for you."

Jason smiled awkwardly.

"...Thanks, Ma."

Mrs. T walked around the apartment like she'd just won the lottery.

"I'm calling Grandma."

"I'm calling Auntie Denise."

"I'm posting this."

Carlos laughed.

"Mama don't even know how Facebook work."

"I'll learn TODAY."

Everyone laughed.

For one perfect minute...

Everything felt right.

Then Jason scratched the back of his neck.

"...Mama."

Mrs. T looked over.

"What?"

"I gotta tell you something."

Carlos immediately recognized the voice.

It was Jason's "I'm about to ruin everybody's day" voice.

"Oh no..."

Mrs. T smiled.

"What is it?"

Jason looked down.

"I don't think I'm going."

Silence.

Carlos slowly stopped chewing.

Mrs. T stared.

"...Going where?"

"College."

The room froze.

Even the refrigerator seemed quieter.

Mrs. T laughed.

"Boy, quit playing."

"I'm serious."

Her smile disappeared.

"What do you mean serious?"

Jason inhaled.

"I wanna rap."

“what you mean wrap the invite in plastic”

Carlos closed his eyes.

"Oh Lord..."

Mrs. T blinked twice.

"...Rap?"

Jason nodded.

"I've been recording with Terrell."

"We got songs."

"We building a following."

"I think this is my shot."

Mrs. T stared at him another few seconds.

Then folded the acceptance letter...

Very...

Very slowly. Anger and rage was obvious.

"So..."

She said calmly.

"You telling me..."

Jason swallowed.

"You throwing away a full scholarship..."

"...to become Lil' Whoever?" “dont do this, you know how i feel about those little hustler type guys.

Carlos covered his face.

"Jason..."

Jason raised both hands.

"It ain't like that."

"We actually good."

"Our videos getting views."

Mrs. T folded the letter again.

"So that's the plan?"

Jason nodded.

"I think God gave me music."

“god gave you a brain use it”

Mrs. T looked toward the ceiling.

"Lord..."

She whispered.

"I asked for patience."

Carlos quietly slid his plate farther away.

He knew what was coming.

Mrs. T suddenly exploded.

"BOY HAVE YOU LOST YOUR EVERLASTING MIND?"

Jason jumped.

"Mama—"

"I worked TWO JOBS!"

"I missed birthdays!"

"I wore shoes with holes in them!"

"So you could have choices!"

Jason spoke softly.

"I appreciate that."

"You appreciate it by saying NO?"

"I just don't wanna spend four years studying something I don't love."

Mrs. T pointed toward the acceptance letter.

"You know how many kids prayed for this?"

Jason looked away.

"I know."

"No you don't."

Carlos finally stepped in.

"Mama..."

She spun around.

"Don't 'Mama' me!"

Carlos slowly backed up.

"...Never mind."

Jason sighed.

"I wanna build something."

Mrs. T crossed her arms.

"So you gonna be rich next week?"

"No."

"Next month?"

"No."

"So who's paying car insurance?"

Jason stayed quiet.

Mrs. T reached into her purse.

"Give me those keys."

Jason frowned.

"What?"

"The car."

Jason looked confused.

"Mama..."

"The keys."

Silence.

He slowly reached into his pocket.

His fingers tightened around them.

Mrs. T extended her hand.

"The keys."

Jason reluctantly dropped them into her palm.

The jingle echoed through the apartment.

Mrs. T slipped them into her purse.

"You wanna chase rap dreams?"

"You can catch the city bus."

Carlos tried not to laugh.

Jason shot him a look.

"Dude..."

Carlos shrugged.

"I ain't laughing..."

A tiny snort escaped.

Mrs. T glared.

"Carlos."

His smile disappeared.

"Yes ma'am."

"You think this funny?"

"No ma'am."

Jason grabbed his hoodie.

"I'm going outside."

Mrs. T sat back down.

"You'll thank me one day."

Jason opened the door.

"Maybe."

The apartment door slammed.

Hard.

An hour later...

The neighborhood basketball court echoed with bouncing basketballs and squeaking sneakers.

Carlos sank an easy three-pointer.

Swish.

Jason caught the rebound without saying anything.

Carlos dribbled beside him.

"You really doing this?"

Jason nodded.

"Yeah."

Carlos sighed.

"You know Mama ain't mad because of rap."

"I know."

"She scared."

Jason spun the basketball on one finger.

"I don't wanna live somebody else's dream."

Carlos nodded.

"I get it."

"But dreams don't pay rent right away."

Jason smiled.

"You sounding old."

"I'm twenty-four."

"You thirty in big-brother years."

Both laughed.

Carlos bounced the ball back.

"Listen..."

"If you really serious..."

"Do music."

"But don't throw college away."

"You can do both."

Jason shrugged.

"I don't know."

Carlos looked toward the woods beyond the school fence.

The afternoon sun disappeared behind strange gray clouds.

For just a second...

He thought he saw someone standing perfectly still between the trees.

A tall man.

Long black coat.

Wide-brim hat. strange but all fast.

Watching them.

Carlos blinked.

The figure was gone.

Jason noticed.

"What?"

Carlos forced a smile.

"Nothing."

But somewhere beyond the basketball court...

Something smiled back.

The hip hop museum

The alley smelled of old rain and something metallic. Jason clutched the five-dollar bill, the worn edges soft against his thumb. This was it. The

Rap Museum. Downtown. A place his mom, Mrs. T, would never step foot in. She called it a den of iniquity, a distraction from the sensible path of college. But Jason's heart thumped a different rhythm, a beat he felt in his bones. Was music his future? Or was it the sterile halls of academia Mrs. T envisioned?

He pushed open the creaky door. Inside, the air was thick with the ghosts of rhymes and beats. Dim lights cast long shadows, making the graffiti-covered walls seem to writhe. A man with eyes that held ancient wisdom and a smile that hinted at secrets sat behind a small counter. He wore a faded, autographed hip-hop hat. This was Pops, the museum's keeper, a legend whispered about in hushed tones by local artists.

"Welcome, young blood," Pops rasped, his voice like gravel rolling downhill. "Five bucks to enter the land of sound."

Jason handed over the bill. Pops' smile widened, revealing a glint of gold tooth. "And a soda pop for the journey?" he offered, gesturing to a cooler humming ominously in the corner. Jason nodded, choosing a bright red one. The fizziness tickled his throat as he stepped further into the museum.

The walls were a chaotic collage of history. Yellowed flyers advertised legendary battles. Faded photographs showed smiling faces of pioneers. A display case held a worn-out turntable, its needle forever poised. Jason traced the grooves on an old vinyl record, imagining the energy that once pulsed from it. He could almost hear the crowd roaring. He felt a strange pull, a sense of belonging he'd never experienced before. This was more than just music; it was a culture, a voice for the voiceless.

He moved deeper into the maze of exhibits. A section dedicated to horrorcore rap sent a shiver down his spine. The lyrics displayed were

dark, unsettling, tales of fear and despair. He saw posters for groups whose names sounded like nightmares. A mannequin wore a tattered cloak, a menacing grin painted on its face. Jason felt a prickle of unease. This was a side of music his mother would definitely despise, a dark mirror to her bright, orderly world. Yet, there was a raw power in it, a cathartic release in confronting the shadows.

He stopped before a display of old microphones. One, in particular, stood out. It was scarred, dented, as if it had weathered a thousand storms. A small, handwritten tag read: “The Whisperer. Used by the unseen.” A chill snaked up Jason’s arm. He felt a strange urge to touch it, to connect with whatever energy it held. As his fingers neared the cold metal, a faint whisper seemed to echo in his mind, too soft to decipher, yet undeniably there. He pulled his hand back, his heart pounding.

He felt a sudden shift in the atmosphere, a drop in temperature that had nothing to do with the soda pop. The shadows seemed to deepen, elongating into distorted shapes. He glanced at Pops, who was watching him with an unreadable expression, his eyes glinting in the dim light.

Then, it happened. A guttural growl, seemingly from nowhere, ripped through the silence. The lights flickered violently, plunging the room into near darkness. Jason stumbled back, his soda pop sloshing. He heard a scraping sound, like claws on concrete, coming from the darkest corner of the room.

Panic seized him. He wanted to run, to bolt for the door, but his feet felt rooted to the spot. A shadowy figure began to materialize, tall and gaunt, its eyes glowing with an eerie, malevolent light. It was more shadow than substance, a manifestation of the darkness he’d seen on the posters. The whispers intensified, swirling around him like a chilling wind, now

forming words, dark incantations filled with despair and rage.

“You…cannot…escape…” the whisper hissed, its voice a chilling symphony of fear.

Suddenly, Pops’ voice boomed, cutting through the terror. “Stand firm, young blood! This place holds many stories, some darker than others. But the beat is stronger than the silence!”

He moved with surprising agility, grabbing an old, dusty boombox from a shelf. With a flick of his wrist, he pressed play. A fierce, driving hip-hop beat erupted, powerful and defiant. The shadowy figure recoiled, as if struck by an invisible force. The whispers faltered.

Jason, his own fear momentarily eclipsed by the surge of music, found his voice. He started to rap, the words tumbling out, a raw expression of his own anxieties and newfound courage. He rapped about the choices he faced, the darkness he felt, and the light he craved. His voice, shaky at first, grew stronger with each line, fueled by the pounding beat and Pops’ knowing glance.

As he rapped, the shadowy figure began to dissipate, fading back into the oppressive darkness from which it came. The whispers quieted, replaced by the triumphant rhythm of the music. The lights stabilized, casting a warm glow once more.

Jason’s chest heaved. He looked at Pops, who was nodding slowly, a proud smile on his face. “You found your voice,” he said, his eyes twinkling. “It’s louder than any shadow.” He then reached into his pocket and pulled out the autographed hat he was wearing. “A gift. For the one who faced the darkness and sang through it.”

He placed the hat on Jason’s head. It felt surprisingly light, yet heavy with history. Jason thanked Pops, his voice still a little hoarse. He walked out of the museum, the red soda pop forgotten.

As he turned up the street, the bright sun felt warm on his face. Then, he saw them. A family huddled in a doorway, a mother and two small children, their faces etched with hunger and weariness. They held a tattered cardboard sign that read: “Anything helps. God Bless.”

The contrast struck Jason like a physical blow. He thought of the whispers, the shadows, the fear that had gripped him in the museum. But he also remembered the music, the beat, the power of his own voice. He thought of Mrs. T’s worries, her desire for a stable future.

He looked at the family, their silent plea a different kind of music, a mournful song of struggle. He realized then. His path wasn't about escaping reality, but about confronting it, about using his voice to tell stories, to shed light on the darkness, and to offer a beat of hope to those who needed it most. College could wait. Music, this raw, powerful, sometimes terrifying music, was his calling. He had to find a way to use it to make a difference, to be a voice for those whose whispers were unheard. The hat felt heavy, a promise on his head. He walked towards the family, his decision made.

The b-ball game

Jason and Rockell walked into the loud gym. The smell of sweat and popcorn filled the air. It was Carlos’s big basketball tournament. Carlos was Jason’s younger brother. Jason squeezed Rockell’s hand.

“Are you excited?” he asked.

Rockell smiled. “Of course! I want to see Carlos win.”

They found seats near the court. The crowd cheered as the players ran out. Carlos was one of them. He looked small next to some of the other players, but he played with a lot of energy. Jason felt a pang of worry. Carlos was good, but this tournament was called “Paid Battle.” That meant the competition was tough.

The first game started. Carlos’s team was playing hard. He was fast and smart. He made a few amazing shots. Jason watched, a mix of pride and fear in his stomach. He kept an eye on Rockell. She was laughing with a friend, her attention on the game.

Then, Jason saw someone he didn’t expect. Sitting a few rows down was Terrell, his other brother. Terrell was older and usually kept to himself. He was watching the game intently. But that wasn’t the strangest part. Next to Terrell, a young woman was sitting. She had a two-year-old boy on her lap, who was playing with her hair. Jason knew her. It was Lisa. She was Terrell’s girlfriend. And Jason had a bad feeling about her being here. He remembered Rockell mentioning something about Lisa being a little���odd. Something about her being too close to her family, almost unnaturally so.

“Hey, Rockell,” Jason whispered, nudging her. “Look who’s here.”

Rockell followed his gaze. Her eyes widened slightly. “Oh, wow. Terrell and Lisa. I didn’t think they’d come.” She paused. “Is everything okay?”

“I don’t know,” Jason admitted. “Lisa’s here with her little brother, I think. She’s holding him really tight, almost like… like he’s a part of her.” He shivered, though the gym was warm.

The games continued. Carlos’s team won their first match. Then their second. He was playing incredibly well. Jason felt a little bit of his worry ease, but the sight of Lisa kept him on edge. She hadn’t looked at them. She was focused on Terrell, her hand resting on his arm, her thumb tracing slow circles. The little boy on her lap babbled softly.

The highlight of the tournament was the dunk contest. Carlos was up against a tall, light-skinned guy named Float. Float was amazing. He jumped so high, it looked like he could touch the ceiling. The crowd roared with every dunk. Then it was Carlos’s turn. He took a deep breath. He ran, jumped, and slammed the ball through the hoop with a powerful dunk. The gym erupted. He had done it. He won the dunk contest.

After the tournament, Jason saw Terrell and Lisa getting up to leave. He decided to go over, despite his unease. Rockell followed him, her hand finding his again.

“Hey, Terrell,” Jason said, trying to sound casual.

Terrell nodded. “Jason. Rockell.” He looked a little tired.

Lisa turned. Her eyes met Jason’s, and he felt a cold dread creep up his spine. Her smile was a little too wide, her eyes too bright. The little boy on her lap stirred.

“Jason,” Lisa said, her voice a little breathy. “And Rockell. It’s nice to see you.” She adjusted the boy, who was now staring at Jason with wide, unblinking eyes. “This is my nephew, Timmy.”

“He’s cute,” Rockell said, her voice a little strained.

“He’s special,” Lisa corrected, her gaze flicking back to Jason. “Very special.”

Terrell cleared his throat. “Lisa’s uncle is here. Darnell. He’s a producer for rap music. He wanted to meet you guys.”

Jason blinked. “Darnell? The producer?” He’d heard of him. Darnell was making big waves in the music industry.

“Yes,” Lisa said, her smile never wavering. “He’s very interested in talent. He thinks he might see some here tonight.” Her eyes lingered on Jason, then on Carlos, who was now jogging over, beaming with pride.

Carlos joined them. “That was insane! I can’t believe I won the dunk contest!”

“You were amazing, little bro,” Jason said, forcing a smile. He still felt that prickle of unease. Lisa’s gaze was fixed on Carlos now, a strange intensity in her eyes. The little boy, Timmy, started to whimper, his small hands clutching at Lisa’s shirt.

“He doesn’t like loud noises,” Lisa murmured, stroking Timmy’s

back. “But he loves music.” She looked at Jason again. “Uncle Darnell is a very influential man. He can make careers. He knows what’s… valuable.”

Jason felt a chill run down his spine. The way she said “valuable” sent a shiver through him. It wasn’t just about music. It felt like a warning. Or a threat. The gym, which had been filled with the joyous sounds of basketball and cheering, now seemed to hold a new, unsettling silence, punctuated only by Timmy’s soft whimpers and the unnerving stillness in Lisa’s eyes. He felt a growing certainty that meeting Uncle Darnell might be far more dangerous than winning any basketball tournament.

THE CALL FROM D

Jason was sitting in his dimly lit room, the glow of his screen lighting up his focused face. He had spent the evening immersed in a wild adventure on his favorite video game. In the game, he was a fearless knight battling fierce dragons to save a kingdom. The noises of swords clashing and the thundering roars of the dragons made him feel alive.

Suddenly, after an intense boss battle, his phone buzzed loudly on the cluttered desk. He paused the game and picked it up. It was Darnell, the new producer he had met through Lisa Terrell, the girlfriend of his friend, Homey. Jason's heart raced; this could be the opportunity he'd been waiting for.

"Hey, Jason! It's Darnell," the voice on the other side was cheerful and excited. "I hope you’re ready for some big news."

Jason took a deep breath, trying to keep calm. "Yeah, I'm here. What's up?"

"I want to offer you something special. How about a brand new Rolex? It’s worth two grand!" Darnell exclaimed. Jason couldn’t believe his ears. A fancy watch was not just a gift; it felt like a ticket to a new life.

His mind raced as he thought about the possibilities. “And that’s not all! I’m assigning you your first rehearsal date with Homey Terrell this Saturday. Don’t disappoint me, alright?”

“Wow, thank you!” Jason said, trying hard to contain his excitement. "I won’t let you down!"

As the call ended, Jason jumped up, nearly knocking over a stack of empty pizza boxes. Was this real? A Rolex and a rehearsal? His heart thudded like a drum. He felt like he was standing on the edge of something great, but also something strange.

He rushed downstairs to tell his mom, Mrs. T. She was sitting in the living room, watching her favorite detective show. "Mom! You won’t believe what just happened!"

She turned to him, her face lighting up with curiosity. "What, honey?"

"Darnell just called. He’s giving me a Rolex and setting up a rehearsal with Homey! Can you believe it?”

Mrs. T smiled but looked worried for a moment. "That sounds amazing, Jason. Just remember to be careful with new people. Not everyone is who they seem."

Jason nodded, but his excitement drowned out her concern. The doorbell rang. It was Carlos, his friend with the striking green eyes and carefree smile. “Hey, man! I heard the great news. I’m here to take you for a ride!”

“Thanks, Carlos! I need to go to Rockelle with you on Saturday, and I’ll pay you fifty bucks for the lift,” Jason said, grabbing his jacket.

“No problem! Just keep your phone charged, alright? You never know what could happen.” Carlos replied, pulling him out of the house.

As they drove through the quiet streets, Jason felt a mix of excitement and anxiety. The town was eerily quiet, the streetlights flickering intermittently, casting long shadows along the road. He glanced at Carlos, who seemed unusually serious.

“What’s up?” Jason asked.

“Nothing really. Just thinking about the rehearsal. Is everything okay with that Darnell guy?” Carlos asked, eyes on the road.

“Yeah, why?” Jason replied, a little defensively.

Carlos shrugged, looking uncertain. “Just heard some stories about fast money and swift promises. Just be careful.”

Jason dismissed his friend’s worries. He was too high on the thrill of the moment to consider them. They parked at Rockelle, the local hangout where Lisa would be, ready to celebrate their upcoming journey.

As they stepped in, Jason felt the buzz of energy around the place. Friends were laughing, music was playing, and everything felt alive. Lisa spotted them and rushed over with her bright smile. “There you are, stars of the night!”

Suddenly, the lights flickered, and a low rumble reverberated through the floor, causing a moment of stillness where laughter faded into silence. Jason’s heart raced again, but it wasn’t from excitement anymore. He noticed that people looked around confused, as if waiting for something to happen.

Then, out of nowhere, a thunderous crash echoed from the back of the club, followed by shouts of panic. The lights went out completely, plunging them into darkness.

“Get down!” Carlos shouted, pulling Jason close.

In the pitch black, Jason could hear whispers and footsteps

moving fast. His excitement drained away, replaced by a creeping fear. Was this just a prank, or was something truly wrong?

Suddenly, a flashlight flickered on, illuminating a shadowy figure at the corner. It was Darnell, standing there with a strange smile. “Jason! I’m glad you could make it. I told you not to disappoint me.”

Jason’s heart sank as a chill ran through him. The excitement of the watch and the rehearsal faded as fear crept in. “Darnell? What’s going on?”

“Nothing to worry about. Just a few surprises,” Darnell replied, stepping forward into the light, but he looked different, almost sinister.

Jason backed away, pulling Carlos with him. They needed to get out, but the door was blocked by the crowd flowing towards Darnell.

“Let’s go!” Carlos urged, grabbing Jason’s arm.

They pushed through the chaos, desperate to find a way out as more mysterious shadows moved within the crowd. Just as they made it outside, Jason glanced back at Darnell, a twisted grin revealing something dark and unexpected.

In that moment, he realized that the world of excitement he had

entered might not be what it seemed. He and Carlos raced away into the night, leaving the horrors behind, but the thought of what lay ahead lingered in Jason’s mind.

(Preface) The show was lit, but wait?

The show The lights flickered out of control , smart phones and led bracelets casting vibrant hues across the roaring crowd, made a scene they couldn't forget . The beat was rocking, “ The girls were crazy, and crowd went so loud he could barely hear a thing. Sweaty, over energized and eyes glazed over, he grabbed a bottle of water from his hype man k-dove, a good child hood friend of the duo, who called themselves Guapo and Bugatti, that is before the incident occurred. Jason adjusted his microphone. “man, this is crazy, he said looking at Terrell, I did not think Darnell would pull through as a manager but he did” they looked over at the husky Darnell standing in the corner talking to the event master. He slowly adjusted his new smart phone in his pocket as it rang, he knew it was his mother she was always worried sick about him, even though the was no longer a little kid. It couldn’t have been sweeter, they had waited for this moment for a while. “man i can’t wait until Yoshi the hater, sees

this , I bet I don’t look like a bum rapper anymore, I never seen a bum rapper with two point three million instagram followers. “Jason, microphone in hand, “I Can’t hear yawl, make some noise” ‘ I love you Bugatti, one teenage girl yelled from the back of the crown waiving her drink in the air. he said wiping his forehead lightly, he looked up at the titan Tron in the arena , and saw himself as the new Tupac , although no one agreed. “man, this couldn’t have come out better, we legit” Terrell said laughing before sipping an energy drink, and then throwing it playfully into the crowd trying to

look natural. He then took of his shirt and began to invite a few country looking fans on the stage.

Security grew tense but allowed it. They were temps only there for day, they didn’t really cared what happened , but they had to pretend they did, they were being paid by the hour. This was the dream, it had been a while coming but they earned, they hustle and now, it was all real too real in fact, too real to be true. He felt the bass vibrate through his very bones. Beside him, Terrell matched his energy, spitting rhymes with a fervor that whipped the audience into a frenzy. “yeah, yeah are you ready for another song?” This was it – their first real show, a culmination of years of late-night writing sessions, beat battles, and unwavering belief in their music and grit. The venue, a converted warehouse on the edge of town, was packed.

“Somebody pinch me I’m dreaming” Rockelle Jason's girl friend yelled while twerking for fans on the side ramp. Rocking glittered gloves, an eighties track suit and chaotic Jerry curls, “Ms. kitty” Rockelles stevens, was stealing the show. She twerked to the beat, like she had lost her ever loving mind, she was glad her boyfriend made it, now she was getting the attention she had finally deserved. There hit song “let the beat

drop” based in the background on the loud speakers. Sweat dripped from the exposed rafters, mingling with the haze of anticipation. Every lyric, every beat was met with a tidal wave of cheers. Jason and Terrell, known as *“Guapo and A.K- Bugatti, ”Bugatti for short,* were killing it. But amidst the euphoria, a discordant note began to creep in. At first, Jason dismissed it as a lone heckler, someone trying to disrupt the flow. But the boos were persistent, growing louder, more pointed. They seemed to emanate from a single source: a figure cloaked in a dark hooded jacket, standing near the back. The figure was unsettlingly still, a dark void in the vibrant tapestry of the crowd. Even from the stage, Jason could sense the man's intense focus, an unnerving gaze fixed solely on him. He tried to ignore it, to lose himself in the music, but the boos became a relentless drumbeat against his focus. During a break between songs, Terrell clapped Jason on the shoulder, "You're doing great, man! Don't let that weirdo get to you." Jason forced a

smile. "Yeah, you're right. Just gotta stay focused." But as the set continued, the hooded figure’s presence became increasingly difficult to ignore. Each boo felt like a physical blow, each jeer a chilling whisper in his ear. Jason started making mistakes, stumbling over lyrics, missing cues.

The energy he had arrived with was slowly draining away,

replaced by a growing unease. The tension reached its peak, during their final song,the final track was hot, their breakout hit, "City of Shadows." As the beat dropped, the hooded figure surged forward, pushing through the crowd with unnerving ease.

People stumbled aside, their faces etched with a mixture of fear and confusion. Before Jason could react, the figure was on stage, moving with a speed that defied his bulky frame. He lunged, grabbing Jason's arm with surprising strength. A collective gasp swept through the audience. “What the hell!" Terrell shouted,

stepping forward to intervene, but the hooded figure shoved him aside with a force that sent him sprawling. Panic

flared in Jason's chest. He tried to pull away, but the figure's grip was like iron. “he had to be brave he had to look like a thug” his fans were watching. It was then, as he struggled fear pulsed through him and panic surged, that he saw it – the man's hand a fan or not he was out of line . It was gnarled and pale, almost translucent his breath was funky and unlike anything he had seen . The nails were long and yellowed, ‘man if you don’t get your hands off me,” he exclaimed! before swearing loudly although the crowd could not hear him, cursing a fan was not a good look for a first show, but it happened. before preparing to box, the intruder” dug into him curving into sharp, claw-like points the nails hurt. “ahh what the hell somebody get this dude” he said motioning to the two security guards to the right of the set. They looked less like human nails and more like the talons of some predatory bird or demon cold and hard they were weapons indeed. A wave of nausea washed over Jason. The air around the figure seemed to grow cold, and a faint, acrid smell filled his nostrils. He stared at the hand, transfixed by a primal fear. The skin was stretched taut over the bones, revealing the grotesque architecture beneath. He looked up at the figure's face, but the hood obscured everything, casting his features

in impenetrable shadow. The figure leaned in close, and a raspy voice, like the rustling of dry leaves, whispered in Jason’s ear, “You shouldn’t have called them forth.” Called them forth? Jason’s mind raced, trying to make sense of the cryptic words. But before he could respond, the figure tightened his grip, his claw-like nails digging into Jason’s flesh. A searing pain shot up his arm, and he cried out. Suddenly, the stage lights flickered and died, plunging the

venue into darkness. A collective scream erupted from the crowd. In the chaos, Jason felt himself being dragged towards the edge of the stage. He thrashed and kicked, desperate to break free, but the figure’s grip remained unyielding. Then, just as suddenly as it began, the darkness lifted. Emergency lights flickered on, casting an eerie green glow over the scene. The hooded figure was gone. Jason stood alone on the stage, his arm throbbing, his mind reeling. security swarmed in late with baseball bats but it was too late and he was irate. “man I guess you guys don’t believe in speed” he said angrily. Terrell rushed to his side, his face a mask of concern. "Jason! Are you okay? “I guess what the heck did he want” What the hell was that? “Jason stared at his arm, where deep crimson welts were already rising. He could still feel the phantom pressure of those unnatural claws, the chilling whisper in his ear. He looked out at the terrified faces in the crowd, at the bewildered security guards, at Terrell’s worried gaze. He knew he couldn’t explain what had just happened, not really. He didn't understand it himself. But one thing was clear: their first show had ended in a nightmare. And somehow, he knew, this was just the beginning of something cryptic and far stranger than he had ever seen before, he did believe in demons he was a simple city boy chasing that paper as they said it. The music, the fame, the city of shadows darnell and strangeness of the attacker – he had unwittingly opened a door, and something terrible had crawled through.

-Introduction

Often times in life we find ourselves victims of imaginary forces, and most commonly, the strongest of these forces is fear itself, we regularly find ourselves in imaginary prisons caused by guilt shame and doubt, and the only limit that really exist is the limit of how we respond to fear. We are usually hostages to our own

psyche and rogue emotional addictions.

Each thought can create a metaphysical bar that ultimately leads to a caged mind. This horror story is really about fear and how it changes the human self and the human destiny, read on…….

RIDEBUDDY

(rude awakenings)

Things had taken a turn for worse in the cold muddy wooded area, and they knew it would . A death match in the middle of nowhere, none of them saw it coming. “man I wish we never came here” he said eyes watered and broken with faint tears of defeat “bro, it’s too late now, just fight” Jason replied. “what do you want me to do? , “ I mean, I’m not a action hero my dude.” “just keep swinging, if it wounds, we can kill it.”

Terrell responded, whipping the sweat from his brow. His shirt was drenched and his muscles were tense. This was all too surreal, nobody told him that being in your early twenties meant fighting for your life against wild animals in random places.

The sound of silence filled the background of the battle, echoed by the blowing of wind and the crashing of leaves under the feet of the brave. Jason kneeled helplessly knees buried in the mud and dirt his youthful and discouraged young brown face was filled with unavoidable tears and agony, he finally tilted his head back and let out a shrieking cry. “Somebody body do something to help him, come on man, we have to help him. “There isn’t a thing we could do.” Latrice shouted with an angry quiver in her voice,” gulping for air she gently wiped the sweat from her forehead “where is my damn baby, is he ok?” she looked over her shoulder grabbing at her baby strapped to her back making sure he had not come a loose in the midst of the ungodly chaos that had unfolded. God forbid what would happen if he did. He was there, and now she could breathe again and continue

fighting. She knew it was no place for her nine-month-old son to be, but it was her reality, a death match with dogs.

Impatient and ready to escape, cold smoke blew from her lips as she tried to control her breath gasping for air and paranoid she looked around to see if more were coming. ‘I can’t believe I got my self into this shit” she said panting and gasping for breath.

Jason’s eyes were glazed over and filled with sorrow and remorse. “Unless you really want to die with him, we don’t have time to do anything. He won’t make it honey, there are no hospitals, here you know that by now, you are on your own with that action hero stuff people die all the time ” He could not bring himself to accept with his own eyes, what he had just seen.

Tattered clothes and gory remains of a person laid scattered in front of him reminding how serious Voodalla was . They were helpless to stop the carnivorous medley of merciless assaults, on what had just seemed like a regular guy trapped in a bad place like they all were. A young street kid around the age or nineteen as far as they new turned into a scene from westside story by strange animals from a voodoo world . They all knew it was too late for the innocent young man they had just met they were forced to suck it up and keep moving. Although the desire to enact revenge pulsated through their veins. They wanted to stay and do battle with the hateful strange and condescending, animals that held them in contempt, but they simply

didn’t have the time or energy they had to make it to the safety point, a safe place was the reason they all had left the comfort and safety of the stone room in the first place. It was inevitable and abominable that at least some of them, would become prey and a meal to the formidable dogs of hell. Memories surged through Jason’s Brain like a speeding freight train of intuition and fear, in all of his strain and grief, he wondered deeply how in the hell did he end up in the middle of nowhere in the first place. regret pulsed through his body while he stared at the unlucky Patrick.

the hounds panted and laughed at the site almost mocking the innocent victims, Thoughts entangled his young mind in a whirlwind of awe doubt shame and mesmerizing fear , how did the innocent deserve to suffer in such a way. All of his thoughts brought him back to day one of how his or this diabolical nightmare had begun. The days before the music career, the days before Guapo and Bhugatti had begun, they days before their invented persona had turned into a creepy cautionary tale about wrong decisions.

In the beginning……hotel of dreams, and Jason’s mom Mrs- T.

Misty Falls was a strange city surrounded by woods cemeteries, illegally, occupied buildings and old plantation sites. With a stable population of 2.5 million people mostly black, many crimes went unchallenged by law, missing people simply vanished, without a search most of the time. Regardless of the crime rate many stilled called it home. It was getting late and the clustered nightmare at the job was starting to come to an end, working long hours the two young black men were ready to go, the small sweaty kitchen was a common theme in Jason’s young life, “man I swear if I see one more person dropping off more work for me to do, today will be my last day, dog, for real” Jason said laughing shamelessly ,the Bell View Hotel was about to close rest was finally in view. Jason proceeded to the clock, to clock out and grab his bags from the break room locker upstairs, “turn that damn music down!” he yelled before he leaned in, and grabbed his co-worker Ray by the shoulder, Ray removed his headphones and dapped out his coworker. “I’m out man, and it’s time for me

to bounce bro." "Cool, we should be good, we all caught up." Ray responded. He took one last look at the many pots and pans that still remained in the sink, floating around waiting to be washed. He was more than ready to leave it wasn't his problem anymore. He slowly made his way around the building saying goodbye to everyone in his department, "Deuces" he said to his co-worker Tan and Rodrick. He was a great worker for a young guy, and most of the people in the building absolutely adored him. He was a dishwasher, it wasn't the greatest job in the world, but he was only 22. He was satisfied to simply be on a payroll somewhere.

His mom worked two jobs his entire way through high school, it was his time to pay her back. He worked really hard to make sure his mother, "Mrs.-T" was financially set, before he decided to move out on his own. Being a single mother she always supported him, in everything that he did, sports, music whatever the cause, she was always there to support her son.

Jason began making his way down to the locker room "finally I am about to leave this crazy ass place, texting his mom on the all the down to the first floor. He quickly removed his clothes to take a quick vanity shower, he embraced the warm caressing waters on his skin, 'he didn't want to be one of those stinky dudes on the city bus, he was young and dapper and prided himself on his appearance. while bathing, he began to wander off mentally, he soon began to have a vision, he was in a dark room and there were too girls about his age looking down at the floor sobbing. "Are you ok, what's the deal, he asked?" he reached out to touch the girl but before he could he awoke from the vision. It was first for him, what did it mean. He quickly grabbed a towel from the rack and began to dry himself. On the way out he stopped in the breakroom to pull his lunch box out of the

freezer, on the way in, he encountered Mrs. Carol, his favorite break time buddy. "Are you leaving, sugar? Yes, –I-am gone, he said enthusiastically, he leaned over to give the 67-year-old Mrs. Carol a hug goodbye. "Be careful honey, she exclaimed, I mean on your way home, every day I watch the news people just keep getting missing in this city." "Just be careful, is all I'm saying." "I will Mrs. Carol, but if it's your

time it’s your time, I guess.” “My momma always said tomorrow is not promised to anybody.” He quickly, left after the comment. Carol was a sweet lady but she would talk you to sleep if you let her. He knew that if he didn’t leave then he would be there for the next three hours hearing her talk about her mortgage, church and her weight.

He walked outside the building and breathed an exonerating breath of relief. He was finally off, the atmosphere was lit and the people where fun but he was exhausted. It had been a long hard day for him. The dishes had seemed endless that day for some reason. He continued out of the gate of the building to the city bus stop and sat down to wait for his best bro Terrell, who also worked there. Carrying a gym bag and energy drink he casually walked and sat down. Up the street he noticed a familiar face coming down the side of the road waving and yelling . “oh no, Lonzo, man I am not in the mood for this shit.” He said hanging his head down. “I’m tired I wonder what he want now, I’m not buying whatever he selling.” “what’s up man, big money, check this out bro, I got bus passes, weed and a some food stamps for sell, help me out bro, what you got, you know I will throw you a deal” “I’m good, I don’t need a pass man, I got one” and I’m not trying to buy no food stamps I’m good.” Lonzo was the hustler in front of every convenience store you just wanted to go away, but he was cool and funny and people often

bought from him. “well catch me next time” “that’s a bet” Jason replied. “Dude, I saw you on T.v the other day, how your music coming.” “oh yea that was something my manager Joel set up, it was hot huh?” thrilled at being acknowledged he almost wanted to buy the bus pass that Lonzo was selling. Jason finally came out of the building and the two carried on to the front gate, next to the parking deck.

The Vision

They would often ride the same bus home because they didn’t live far from each other. They were in there early twenties, Jason Brightside age twenty two, and Terrell Jones, age twenty three had been homies since middle school and ready for life, ready for the hustle, the sweat and trials and errors of just existing.

The world was new to them but they were ambitious , and the city of Misty falls was full of promising possibilities along with crime and a lot of other mess that they often engaged in. They decided to take the kosher path “money” and avoid the chaos.

They were not totally sure what they wanted to do with their lives but music was an option the main option, fame glory women and weed, but they were definitely ready for some money, real money not chump change from a dead end job. Terrell’s girlfriend “kelle” was going off to college next year, and he was considering doing the same well at least that’s what he told his mom. A record deal , was his ideal target but he liked to keep an open mind about things. They were already popular and did several shows. Jason was totally undecided, but he often flirted with the idea of owning his own business flea market or swap meet like his uncle steve, selling used gold and such. The only thing he was sure of was, that he wanted to be rich and . He

never desired a normal lifestyle. He had always envisioned himself amongst the luxurious elites of society “rappers, athletes”. They were both members of an up and coming rap group well known on social media , they were both known as lil Guapo and Bugatti to fans. A huge sensation on social media and you tube, they had millions of followers, in fact they were set to do their first summer concert next year, things were looking up for the two. Their manager Joel had set them up with to talk to a record label the following summer. In the meantime, needing cash landed them a job as dishwashers at a popular and booming hotel, the Bell View hotel. The Bell View hotel was a hot new spot in the city, celebs, athletes and rich often showed up in fancy whips and many movies were shot there. It was the “it” spot in the city.

Terrell’s father had been gone since he was six years old. He was alive, so he heard, and he also had other children. He saw him in a photo once, but never met the guy. Despite never seeing him, he didn’t hate the guy, he just decided that he didn’t want to be anything like him when he got older. Instead he wanted to make his Mother proud, as she has made him. He was never without, while in school. He was known in his school as young fashion icon amongst classmates. He was always had the latest clothes and shoes and witty since of humor. Mrs. T. always drove a nice car, she made his high school years memorable in many ways.

After minutes of waiting on the dirty green iron bench of the city bus stop, a sleek black car pulled up alongside the bus stop of the hotel. The owner of car slowly rolled down the window. It was Brandon, a manager in the housekeeping department of the

hotel, they knew him well. They often ate lunch with him cracked bad jokes and showed pics of his growing list of girlfriends , and spent countless days laughing at ridiculous YouTube videos. He was a very likable guy. He was looking more relaxed than normal for some reason maybe he had been smoking. “You guys need a ride he said, I can take you close to wherever you are trying to go, but I can’t take you all the way. My car has been acting crazy lately, for sho.” It’s not as reliable as it used to be.” The car was slick and clean it looked fine to them they could even hear engine purring. The young duo had little patience, they were already tired of waiting on the city bus. “That’s a deal” said Terrell eager and ready to bounce.

Both guys hopped into Brandon’s small black sedan and fastened their seatbelts quickly. Brandon turned on his iPod radio to create a more entertaining ride for the duo. It was about six thirty and the sun was slowly starting to set. The guys were enjoying the short smooth ride to the west side of Misty Falls.

Cool wind blew across their faces as they raced across traffic through the busy downtown streets with the windows down. “So how’s your girl?” “Who Rockelle, man please.” Why you answer like that? Brandon said laughing. “She your high-school sweetheart maaan ! , don’t tell me it’s over already.” “Man, honestly I’m just tired of her. She like to fight too much. When we first met in middle school it was cute, but man that stuff get old fast.” “Um, um, um over already?” he said in a joking manner. “I mean it could be, I guess time will tell Terrell added. By this time the guys had gotten really relaxed. Brandon’s small black Malibu was fast; they were almost there. Jason mumbled along to music in the backseat -while they whisked through the traffic lights. “Man where you get your license? Jason asked, you running lights and

ery-thang, the same place you got your hair cut, Brandon responded before they all

burst out in laughter." "That was cold, said Jason you got me. "You dudes hungry? Brandon spontaneously whipped the car into a McDonald's parking lot. "Yea I'm with it." Terrell exclaimed. They rolled up the window smoothly. "I will have…….three big mac's with fries, and large soda, don't worry he said looking in the back seat, it's on me.

Brandon began to squint looking at the girl in the Mc-Donald's window, hey you look familiar, Rona that you girl? "I thought you look familiar, how you doing Brandon, I haven't seen you since high school, how your sister doing, the girl said." Brandon and his old high-school friend talked for about five minutes and Brandon gave her his number. The guys spent the remainder of the trip laughing at Brandon's corny jokes and listening to rap music.

Finally they had arrived ,they could see the old battered bus stop up ahead. It was at least 7:15 and Brandon's cars slowly strolled towards the second bus top. It was odd location to say the least but the GPS on his phone indicated that they were not very far from their desired location. On the left hand side of the bus top there was a handful of small affordable apartment complexes that were not very well maintained, but the abundance of cars in the parking lot indicated that many people did not have a problem living there. On the other end was a giant cemetery surrounded and encapsulated by dark woods.

Pine trees and tall bushes filled the dark background of the area. Lightly decorated tombstones extended from the curb of the street all the way to the back of the landscape. It was a very weird place to put a bus stop. "Man this, this cemetery next to the bus stop kind of creepy," Jason said to Brandon, I hope it isn't no

ghost or nothing like that, I'm not trying to be, ghostbusters today, and I'm just ready to go home. "Don't tell me you scared, he said before mocking him with Laughter. "Scared no, I just don't like weird graves and stuff, ghost are real, I see them on TV all the time.' "Ghost, man please Brandon laughed casually," I ain't scared of no

Ghost man, Nall. "I was taught as a kid it's the living you have to be

Afraid of, robbers, murderer’s crooked cops that’s what you should

Be afraid of, ghost are dead,” “plus it’s a whole bunch of apartments

In this area, believe me, nothing going to happen to you bruh. They didn’t want to look weak in front of Brandon, so they continued to exit, however, they did find it odd that he wouldn’t take them all the Way.

Jason and Terrell began to unlock the doors of the car. “Thanks bro, I owe you one” Jason said to Brandon. This helps us out a lot. “No problem, anytime I have gas hit me up” Brandon said. Brandon His car slowly began to pull off. His headlights eventually started to disappear into the night. It was starting to get chilly as well, which prompted Jason to check his phone to see what time the bus was actually going to arrive. The sun had already gone down, and darkness covered the street. Four small street lights faintly illuminated the dark massive cemetery.

Leaves blew wildly up the street and small groups of fireflies circled the nearby the tombstones. “Where in the hell is the bus?” Terrell said “it should have been here a while ago” “I don’t know” said Jason maybe the bus broke down they always break down” “I called the customer service hotline twice and they said that the nearest bus should have already been here but that was like an hour ago? So I guess we should just wait” Jason said. “Wait!” Terrell said that’s what you can do, I’m not trying to spend the night on a bus stop in front of a cold cemetery. “Check this out” he said. I have this new ride sharing app called ‘ride buddy’, we can order someone to come pick us up immediately. It’s only about 28 dollars to take us where we need to be. I’ve already put the destination into the ride buddy calculator.

Anything has to be better than sitting out here waiting to become a pop sickle” “I’m cool with that” Jason said. “Anything is better than standing right in front of a grave yard. But the really crazy thing is, I haven’t seen one bus or car tonight”

She is here?

“man, he was cool for taking us, but he really let us down big time dropping us off here, don’t you think it’s a little odd, I mean odd for sure” “well I don’t know man you know people be acting funny with they whip and stuff, maybe he smoked too much.” “it really be like that sometimes, sometimes people are cool and the

other time people are just on some lame stuff, so who knows why he didn’t want to go all the way his car didn’t seemed messed up to me it sounded great.” Terrell was a tall athletic young man with a strong face, he wore dry mini air fro from unbraided hair that lined the side of his head dressed in a t shirt and a varsity jacket the cold air was becoming obvious, Jason had the opposite look he was shorter, a little heavier and his head was covered and little chili locks. Jason turned on his iPhone and began to record the area. Man this place is weird looking, he slowly rotated in circle film the area with his phone, miles of tombstones repeated in rows off into the dark tree line, the orange moon glowed strangely over the dewy grasses and sticks that had fallen from the fall trees up above. “yeah man some real Steven king sh**, now let’s get back to getting a ride please” he slowly walked back to the plastic cube of a bus stop that was dimly lit and full of graffiti. The sound of wheels were noticed in the distance and he didn’t hesitate to look up. “what’s that “ he said squinting trying to see the up coming car. A reddish corvette with candy paint and stripes slowly moved up the street. They could hear someone arguing in the distance, it sounded like a guy and his girl arguing. Finally the car stopped about one hundred feet from the isolated bus stop. “since you don’t care, get out of my car the guy yelled” “fine screw this musty old car you didn’t even pay for it the girl said.” The girls voice sounded familiar for some reason to Terrell. Eventually the girl stepped out of the car. “is that

who I think it is ?” Jason asked. “dog, I think it is, what the hell?” it was Rockelle Terrell’s girlfriend, but she was with another guy?

Beautifully dressed Rockelle wore a pink leather mini skirt, Stillettos and her hair was done to the tee, and he smelled her perfume from up the street. Smothered in make up and a black curly wig, She began to walk down to the bus stop. He could hear

her heels clicking lightly on the concrete. She slowly looked up in horror eyes huge, stunned. “Terrell, hey I didn’t know you were here. “yeah surprised to see you too who was that Rockelle, who on earth was that? That was my friend chill, “chill? You were on a date for god sake” it wasn’t a date he offered me a ride chill, she said looking in a mirror she had pulled from her pocket. Terrell immediately ran off crying of all things, Jason ran right after him. The too found themselves deep in the cemetery kneeling by a large tombstone, “bro it’s not that serious” Jason said patting him on the shoulder. “man I know but I been dating this girl for years she should have just said she wanted out, I bought her prom dress and her first car.” “yeah I know bro but this is not high- school you heard Brandon, just let her go.” He gave Jason a quick hug and brushed the leaves from his jacket, they both looked around and laughed “where are we?” they said in unison. They were surrounded by graves flowers and leaves, A tomb vault sat behind them dimly lit and almost glowing from the orange fluorescent moon. They walked in and looked around filming the entire vault. “its crazy huh, one day we too will be dead” “no time soon I hope” Jason said. “what would your lazy butt do as a ghost?” I don’t know bro, I guess haunt people and smash ghost women I guess” he said and they both laughed. “you a fool man” “ok let’s go back Rockelle the wh***, is by herself.

They both ran back as quick as they could dodging tombstones and broken branches as they ran back to the bus stop. Finally they trotted back into view of the glowing stale box. “where did you two go?” Rockelle said, looking pretty guilty. “don’t matter what went down” he said before nudging her on the shoulder, he always forgave her and regretted it later. She was an abusive girlfriend and his feelings didn’t matter to her at all. Jason hated to see him take crap from the same girl over and over again but

hey what could he do about it. Secretly Terrell was obsessed with how Rockelle looked, and a lot of guys were. Feminine and firmly shaped, tan colored skin and a jewel like nose sat between too large brown hazel eyes. She was the best looking girl in town some said and Terrell's superficial lust was why he was also a victim. Terrell gave the evil rockelle his jacket and they sat there waiting patiently for a bus or car or anything.

Suddenly Jason sees the faint image of a city bus in the distance. "I think we spoke too soon; I think it was just a little late that's all." Jason and Terrell slowly walked into view of the passing by bus. The bus got closer and closer, but the closer it got it seemed to accelerate. Jason and Terrell began to wave their hands "hey right here they shouted! "The lady driving turned to them and smiled maliciously and zoomed right by them? It was a weird and frustrating event.

It was getting colder and the wind started to push right through their jackets. Tingling chills crept around their arms unrelentingly. They knew it was getting late they could hear the crickets chirping loudly in the back ground. For a moment Terrell paused, an eerie feeling came over him. He began to experience a churning feeling of doom and doubt that slowly devoured his mood. He could sense something was wrong but he didn't know what exactly something just felt irregular like something was about to happen he just couldn't tell what. Everyone seemed to be acting a little strange. A chilling feeling of hopelessness came over him, to such a degree that he had to take a seat on the bus stop to catch his breath." "You ok, Jason asked," you acting a little weird. "yeah I'm good he said while catching his breath on the bench, slouched over as if he was getting sick .I'm good I just had

this weird feeling but ,it passed I'm straight now.

Baffled, they turned and looked at each other. How in the hell did she not see us?' he said. We were almost standing in center the street. "I don't know you got me there," Terrell said. Maybe the bus wasn't in route, I'm tired of all this I'm calling ride buddy ass right now" "well I'm with that" Jason replied "let's go." Terrell logged in to

the app urgently. He scrolled through the driver options many of who looked like criminals. He finally came to a profile that looked decent. The man's name was Mr. Charles. He was 73 years old, he drove an old Cadillac and he had a five-star rating from the customers. How much trouble could an old Grandpa be? Terrell thought to himself? So he selected Mr.

Charles as his final option. The estimated wait time was 17 minutes because Mr. Charles was already in the area. They were relieved to at least know that some ride was coming. They had never gotten off at this bus stop here before. It was cold, weird, dark and creepy. They had been there for at least three hours.

Jason's mom was texting every other minute to know where he was, she would have come and picked the two up if she wasn't working a double shift at the bakery. The two young men were waiting patiently after requesting a ride on the app. Jason played games on his phone while Terrell texted his mom. Rockelle sat there looking in the mirror and recording selfies of herself. "why are you here", that's the real question she said in her swanky, hybrid of a new York and southern accent. "I mean I was getting a ride, what you doing here? Don't tell me yawl doing drugs, or worst you all are lovers I knew it? She said before laughing.

"first of all I never have or never will touch a drug, Terrell said laughing and second of all I never have and never will be gay with this guy look at him, he is disgusting. They all laughed and

got back to normal.

Suddenly, the two guys and Rockelle began to hear a rattling noise from the distance. When they looked up the dark road they could see some really dim yellow head lights slowly moving towards them. As it got closer, they could see the faint outline of a large white shining Cadillac. It was shining and looked well maintained. Smoke from the exhaust pipe pumped fluidly out into the cold air. The driver spotted the two of them and waved his hand out of the window. He slowly brought the large old fashioned car to a complete stop in front the o bus stop.

your driver for the

night

“Are you Jason and Terrell, the beautiful young lady will be extra? The old man said. “If you are, I’m Mr. Charles your driver for the night” he said slowly opening the doors of the large white clean Cadillac. The two young men, and Rockelle were in hurry to get in the car and out the cold blistering night air there ghetto fabulous joy ride in Brandon’s Malibu had ended in a cold dark dank bustop. Terrell jumped in the front seat, and Jason jumped in the back. They didn’t even answer the man’s question. The old man laughed at the two young men’s enthusiasm for a ride grinning strangely. The old man was a sight to be seen. He was dressed in a stylish, black, silky church like suit and sporting an unusually large hat and a large black trench coat. They could see his shiny bald head underneath. A dry nappy looking grey beard hung from his jaw. It was so large you couldn’t even see his face.

But they did see him unfortunately, a large nose sat firmly in the middle of his old face, his teeth were large and stained and looked yellow when he grinned, they almost looked sharp. His

eyes were large dull and restless. A ‘z’ shaped scar called his cheek home as if he had been in a death match with someone. You could only see the glimmer on his teeth and the gold caps in his front grill when he smiled. His body was frail and slender, typical of what you would expect from a 73- year old man. His neck was lined with beautiful gold chains and his hands were covered in expensive looking diamond rings. He wore a long black leather coat with a high collar, with only a small hood on his head. his dread locked beard moved slowly as he reached for his gps.

The interior leather of his car was well kept. It was clean and smooth. The entire car smelled like cinnamon and peppermint, oddly. Mr. Charles turned up the old radio slowly to play some music to make the ride more relaxing. Old school gospel music played at a low volume, while the two young men fastened their seat belts and made themselves more comfortable.

A question

Terrell, Rockelle, and Jason had been on their way home for a while now, things didn’t seem to be speeding up anytime soon. “J” still sleep back there?” he barked at Rockelle who was lost in the light of her cell phone. “yeah why you asking me, turn and look for yourself” she responded. “you always have treated me like your helper, and that’s why I have always hated you.” “yeah, yeah” Terrell responded an slouched down in his seat. It was late at night, and they were stranded with no car tired from work they just wanted to go home. Desperate, they decided to use the Ride Buddy app to request a ride, happy to leave but the guy was

just plain odd and so was his large fish-tale Cadillac of a car, who had a car like this in this day of age.Terrell , always the optimist, tried to make small talk with Charles, but the driver seemed disinterested and continued to mutter to himself sometimes. He talked to himself quietly saying strange things like “die,” and “you deserved it mother*****,” in a low tone trying intentionally not to be heard. As they drove further into the darkness, Rockelle couldn't help but feel a chill run down her spine. The silence in the car was deafening, broken only by the occasional muttering of Charles. She couldn't shake the feeling that they were in danger, but she didn't want to alarm her friends but she was also an airhead who 0nly cared if she looked good or not.

CITGO OF OMENS

After what felt like hours, she couldn’t take the gut wrenching pressure in her kidneys anymore. Rockelle finally plucked up the courage to ask Charles to stop at a gas station, so she could use the bathroom,she had drank too much earlier that night. She knew he would catch and attitude but she really didn’t care anymore. “Charles I need to stop boo, I have to piss”

“what ?” he said angrily. Alright, I guess” he said with a sigh. At first, the driver's face twisted in anger the attitude was obvious , but he reluctantly pulled into the nearest Citgo station after about one mile. The building was dimly lit, with only one clerk behind the counter. The parking lot was clear except for one

homeless guy who sat at the curb begging for change. Rockelle got out of the old car and slammed the door which made Charles angry she could see it in his face, he hated young people he just wouldn’t tell the truth. As Rockelle made her way to the bathroom, she felt Charles's eyes burning into her back. It was as if he hated her for inconveniencing him. She quickened her pace, eager to get back to the safety of the car. But as she washed her hands in the poorly lit bathroom, she heard a faint whisper coming from the shadows."Leave now," the voice hissed. Rockelle froze, her heart pounding in her chest. She turned to leave, but the door was locked. Panic set in as she frantically tried to open it, but it wouldn't budge. The whispers grew louder, surrounding her in an eerie cacophony of voices. Back in the car, Terrell and Jason were growing anxious as they waited for Rockelle to return. Charles sat in silence laughing muttering and smoking , staring straight ahead with a blank expression on his face he looked ghoulish to say the least ."Should we go check on her?" Terrell asked, his voice filled with concern. Before Jason could respond, the door to the gas station burst open, and Rockelle stumbled out, her face pale and eyes wide with fear. Without a word, she jumped back into the car, her hands shaking as she

struggled to fasten her seatbelt." Drive, Charles," she whispered, her voice barely audible. The driver nodded slowly and pulled out of the gas station, the car speeding away into the night.

Rockelle recounted her experience in the bathroom, the whispers, the locked door, the feeling of being watched, was it an omen. Terrell and Jason exchanged worried glances, unsure of what to make of it all. As they drove on, the atmosphere in the car became even more tense. Charles's muttering grew louder, his words unintelligible in the darkness. Rockelle's heart raced as she realized they were at the mercy of this mysterious man, alone in the middle of nowhere, but she refused to pull out her head phones and confront the situation it was the boys job to handle this type of stuff, arrogantly she believed it was not her problem.

Jason was weirded out about the man’s appearance and didn’t do much talking he did more sleeping than anything. He dressed somewhat almost like an old pimp, but

gave off a really creepy vibe like he was hiding a lot. He seemed stand-offish. He just stared out the window and was glad he was on the way home after a long day's work and often took naps. Terrell was more curious the more he looked at the man and began to strike up a conversation. "So, Mr. Charles, how did you end up doing ride

buddy for a living?" Mr. Charles slowly turned down the radio to answer. "Well, I'm retired young man really, all of my children are grown and have children of their own, so I don't need the money, I just need something to do, consider it something like a hobby, when you get my age you will understand." He sounded more like a street hustler than a driver he had grimy demeanor worthy of further investigation. "Oh ok" Terrell said. He wasn't really satisfied with the answer but it made sense, so he decided to move on to something else.

Rockelle was repulsed by Charles and she didn't even try to hide it she just cringed without end and snarled every time he tried to look at her. Mr. Charles began to light up a large Cuban cigar and began to puff it gently blowing rings in the car until Jason started to cough. The thick smoke filled the inside of the Cadillac and caused the two young men to cough uncontrollably. "Could you put that out for real? They both said simultaneously we don't really smoke not yet any way. "This is my car" Mr. Charles snarled with a bizarre change in attitude. "Don't like it get out!" He said bluntly and unapologetically. His eyes were wide open as if he wanted to fight. The two were utterly shocked by the instantaneous change in mode. What happened to sweet old Mr. Charles, churchy Charles, who just wanted to make money? It was like he had instantly flipped personalities or possibly on drugs.

The two young men became quiet and shocked at the outburst. They didn't want to risk being kicked out they weren't even sure where they were at? They could only see wooded areas and street lights for miles. They didn't see any familiar buildings or neighborhood structures. They assumed that Mr. Charles, was

taking some type of express route. The entire ride started to remind Jason of those

strange stories on unsolved mysteries shows his grandmother used to watch. He was slowly becoming afraid but wasn't going to say anything due to the risk of being kicked out in the cold. After smoking the entire cigar Mr. Charles turned to them and said, "sorry if I startled you, its dementia, you will have it too when you get this old he then chuckled lightly grinning ear to ear. I don't mean you nice young brother's any harm, but I got to have my cigars, I just do. It's the only thing that holds me together at times." "It's ok, I guess" Terrell said, we all have our own problems he said passive aggressively". The apology wasn't enough for Terrell, he had slowly become weary of their new friend Mr. Charles and thought his personality sucked.

"Where are we going bruh, Terrell said? It's like we have been traveling for an hour and shit, we don't live that far away, you suspect, I just have to say it. I'm following GPS Mr. Charles said trust me where going the right way, you little bi***, if I didn't know what I was doing they would not have hired me, you saw the five star rating" he said before smirking as if he was hiding something. "Let me see the GPS Terrell said, and he grabbed it from the dash board without Charles consent. Mr. Charles immediately grabbed it and they began to fight over the GPS. After tugging and pulling over the GPS Charles slapped! Terrell in the mouth splitting his upper lip, to retaliate Terrell raised his leg and kicked Charles in the shoulder causing Mr. Charles lose control of the steering wheel. The car swirled in a screeching donut in the middle of the dark road the unconfortable trip was now officially a ghetto nightmare. Jason awoke, he was asleep in the back of the car, and Rockelle screamed to the top of her

lungs, "what the hell" "What the hell is going on man, where are we?" Jason shouted. Mr. Charles began to speak, "enough is enough! Rule number one, I smoke whenever I want, rule number two don't ever touch my damn GPS, as a matter of fact, there's no rule number three, two strikes means you're out. Get the hell out of my car! Now!" he shouted angrily.

"U can't kick us out, you are crazy for real, we paid for this ride, and we don't even know where we are" Terrell said. This is the worst ride ever, and I will make sure you are fired, and never drive anyone else ever again" "fine" Mr. Charles said

laughing creepily. “Were not leaving, you crazy old man” Jason said. He got back in the car and shut the door with a vengeance. Terrell looked at Jason and said “your right, we paid for this, you are taking us home.” Mr. Charles frantically started to look for something in his dashboard. He quickly revealed a small hand gun, and placed it on the dash board. Jason and Terrell looked at the gun mystified. Who in the heck was this crazy man pretending to be a ride buddy driver? They quietly thought to themselves, as fear slowly started to creep into their souls.

The two guys left the car no questions asked and the materialist Rockelle followed closely behind. Spooked and confused, they stood there dumbfounded as they looked around and could not identify a single building. Before them stood only woods trees and a dark road lit up from a full moon. The worst possibility was yet to come however. Both guys reached for their phones to call the police and immediately noticed both batteries were dead! And Rockelle’s phone could not get service. They were in the middle of nowhere no phone no ride. There were no buildings in sight, only street lights and forest.

Mr. Charles quickly jumped out of the car. “Stand still! he screamed “Afraid they were going to die, they pleaded “Man you don’t have to do this bro, my mom works two jobs, I can give you some cash, if you need it that bad, just let me contact her, she can cash-app you right now!” Charles had something else in mind.

Rockelle stood behind them speechless holding on to her phone for dear life. “Walk in a straight line dim-wits, he said.” They lined up, all three of them in the weirdest way. He pointed the gun at the backs of Jason Terrell as they walked cautiously and in fear, face the other way or your dead.” For minutes they did not know where they were going, until they arrived at a giant cage, “get in, Charles demanded.” “Why? Said Terrell. “Charles fired two shots straight into the air. By this time, they knew he was totally serious as the sound of the rounds echoed through the trees, this was no joking matter. They crawled defensively into the giant steel cage which reeked of dead meat, stained with blood of presumably the last victim who didn’t obey, Rockelle began to regurgitate immediately as she was a germophobe and had an insane belief about germs . After locking the cage Mr.

Charles walked back to his trunk. And pull out a large fire axe. Jason scream

instantly, “what the hell, I’m sorry man you can smoke as much as you want bruh, I didn’t mean any disrespect fo-real.” Charles walked back to the cage and stood for a moment. The pause was more threatening than the axe itself. Out of no-where, with a vengeance he began smashing away at the top of the cage with the axe for four minutes. Jason and Terrell screamed and pleaded in horror eyes filled with tears. “stop, stop were sorry!” they all shouted. Suddenly Mr. Charles stopped. Two hours had passed after Charles attacked the cage, those hours quickly turned into days. On the second day Charles

pulled out a chair from his trunk while they awakened from a miserable sleep . He placed it 6 feet from the cage and just sat there, looking at them ominously, he just stared for hours like a judge waiting to give his final verdict. “Why is he looking at us like that Jason whispered. “I don’t know man he is obviously psychotic.” Charles went into the trunk again. They awaited in fear. What on earth would he do this time they thought to themselves?

This time he slowly walked to the cage with two small metal bowls in hand. “Time to eat boys and girls .’ He then handed them two bowls through the cage slowly as if he was feeding a puppy or animal. They were terrified as to what would happen if they resisted. They were hungry, but they weren’t sure if they wanted anything he had to offer. Jason stared down into the bowl. It looked like some old molded beans and maybe even a few maggots. He leaned in to smell it, and it smelled awful and rotten. They both sat the bowls down instantly. “Eat the Dang Beans boy!’ Charles screamed at the top of his lungs. Slob flinging form his lips as he spoke. They quickly shoved them into their mouths in fear that he would bring back the axe. Both young men immediately barfed up the rotten smelling food that Charles had offered them. He leaned downed and squatted with a smile on his face, a sinister diabolical grin that stretched from ear to ear. “Are you scared yet, He uttered.” Then his dark eyes suddenly began to glow a flashing red. Terrell looked at him in fright, fixed mainly on his red eyes, what in the hell is he, he thought to himself. “Hell yes! Were scared,” they responded. “That’s all I wanted, now you are ready for them, yeah you’re ready, you two or going to have some real fun when you meet my brothers.” “Them who? Terrell asked?” “You’re about to find out”

Charles responded.” He slowly opened the door, and allowed them to exit the cage, pointing the gun at them the entire time. He quickly trotted back to his car and hopped in, slamming the door.

They could hear Mr. Charles laughing loudly all the way up the road cold dark menacing road. It was clear he had no intent of taking them back to where he found them and it was obvious. They were reduced down to one option. Walk the entire stretch, until they found the nearest town to contact law enforcement.

Rockelle followed behind them speechless, and and in tears, her close were stained with dead meat, her phone didn’t work and her hair was beginning to stink badly . She took out a track suit from her back pack and put it on, she knew she was in for long bad evening. They began to walk, reluctantly slowly tired and humiliated Terrell still wanted to fight after being slapped in the mouth. “I swear he wouldn’t hit me like that if my uncle KK was here, he would take care of him real quick.” Terrell said holding his lip.

They didn’t have much of a choice but to immerse themselves in the dark roads walking aimlessly into forbidden or strange territory. The cold winds seemed to blow right through their basic tee shirts, designer jackets and jeans and it became obvious they were really underprepared for this scenario. The eerie light of the moon shined down on the road illuminating their path.

The smell of moist pine trees caressed their noses as they walked through the heavily wooded area. The distant howl of coyotes unnerved them, as they walked forward. Jason started to cry in frustration “what are we going to do man? We don’t even know where we are, were going to end up coyote food. “This is not how

I planned to die”

“Chill, Terrell said all we have to do is just walk to the end of the road to a gas

station or something, somebody should have a phone or phone charger." "What about the coyotes?" Jason said? Terrell began to stare at a large set of sticks rocks laying by the side of the road. He picked up a large stick and said "well, I guess we may have to fight our way to the end of the road, we probably won't even have to use these sticks, and coyotes usually don't attack humans unless they have rabies. I have watched plenty of

T.V shows on animal planet network, I know what I'm talking about." Jason followed protocol, he also grabbed a large stick from the side of the road. "yeah I guess someone will find us, well I mean I hope Rockelle said shaking her head and pulling out her mirror to make sense of things, she tried to make her appearance more acceptable even though it was officially too late.

They began walking and talking, hoping to pass time while slowly pacing up the long stretch of seemingly never ending road. They were walking for a long time and couldn't see anything accept for the moon and street lights. The coyotes began howling once again. This time louder and louder. The two raised their sticks in the air and began looking around in a circle but they didn't see anything.

"Look" Jason said. "There's a car up ahead" the car began zooming down the dark road and the two began to wave their hands in the air. Deep down they just knew they would get a break at some point. Their hearts suddenly filled with hope.

Shockingly! The car began to roll to a stop. They rushed forward to the mysterious vehicle only to be disappointed. It was Mr.

Charles! He rolled down his window and lifted up his hat his eyes were finally visible and they were pitch black. He shouted at them with vitriol "good luck with those damn dogs! And then he began laughing hysterically." As he speeded off, Terrell hurled a huge rock at the back of his windshield cracking it instantly. It gave the two of them some minor gratification, considering they were not sure what was going to happen next.

Jason began to gather more rocks feverishly. "What are you doing Terrell?"

Asked. “Did you hear what he said about the dogs?” Apparently this was some type of trap, so I’m preparing for the dogs whenever or however they come. Terrell nodded in disbelief and said “right the dogs”. There were so many questions swirling around in his head. Why would an old man do this to them? They didn’t know him maybe he was an enemy of the job they worked at? He thought, there had to be a motive to do something this hateful. He also could not wrap his mind around the red eyes that the man had, they had no white in them. They almost looked demonic. His grandmother lily had always told him stories about demons and things of that nature but he always thought of that type of stuff as fairytales that parents told their children to scare them. It was weird, Mr. Charles definitely fit the profile of a demon in Terrell’s mind but why a demon would come after them, and they were good people, they were too young to have done anything wrong.

Terrell began to draw a cross on his forehead with a marker he found in his backpack. He invited Jason over so he could do the same for him. His mind was racing, they were in the middle

of dark woods, apparently filled with dogs or coyotes there was no one, or building in site, and the worst part of it was the driver looked like something from a horror movie compounded by the fact that they had no phones. It was crazy to say the least.

Another hour had passed, and the howling returned. This time it sounded like it was right behind them. It was so close they could almost feel the presence of something menacing nearby. Jason and Terrell raised their sticks and tried to see using a pen light Jason had from work. When they turned around, they heard footsteps trotting in the foliage of the leaves but they didn’t see anything. They turned around to continue walking and out of nowhere a dark animal burst into the air, like it was shot out of a cannon! A flurry of Leaves flew everywhere as it landed right in front of them. It was large and black and green simultaneously but it didn’t look to be a coyote. It looked like a large black wolf with red glowing eyes! And moth like ears. The teeth looked stained and yellow and the fur looked as if it had been in many battles. The fangs in the front of its mouth were unnaturally large and curved. The black evil dog just sat there and growled viciously with foam dripping from its evil looking mouth, it dipped its head to a pouncing position. It began to howl and bark and shortly after, it lunged

at Terrell knocking him down to the ground. “man get this damn thing off me!” he screamed. The dog began to bite at Terrell’s forearm tenaciously and he began to scream as loud as he possibly could. “bro help me” Rockelle screamed, “help him” to the top of her lungs and ran and hid behind a large log near the road.

Jason was nervous and did not want to see his friend die, so he picked up a giant rock. Jason ran at them with the giant rock in hand and went at the wolf. He tripped right before executing

the move properly, but to his luck, the rock went up into the air and landed square on the back of the head of the savage dog monster. The dog released Terrell’s arm and fell off to the side breathing heavily, it wasn’t dead but appeared to be stunned.

Terrell got up and immediately impaled the dog in the stomach with the stick he was carrying. “take that” he said crying and shaking. The hellish beast died immediately, howling oddly like a man screaming of all things? “What luck’ Jason said. “I tripped and the rock still landed on the dog.” “It wasn’t luck it was the cross on your forehead, these are demons we are dealing with, and I know it sounds crazy, but something really unnatural is going on. Rockelle came back to his side after leaving her hiding place. “what is going on? Saw it trying to get you but I don’t know how to fight sorry” she said looking guilty and in her annoying accent” “this is some white people sh** this doesn’t happen to us,” she said before fixing her black curly wig.

They walked toward the dog to examine it. They shined a laser pen light so they could see clearly, it definitely wasn’t a coyote a wolf or even a domestic dog. It was twice the size of a wolf. The hair was black and green matted thick almost nappy and dreadlocked from natural weathering , the eyes were large red and almost bulging out of its head in the most psychotic way, it had a slit in its eyes much like that of a serpent more than a dog.

The fangs seemed to protrude out of the mouth like vampire fangs, the thing looked anything but friendly . It even had claws on its feet! No dog has claws on his feet, Jason thought quietly, mystified with what he was seeing he leaned in . The mystery

grew deeper with each observation. The ears were large and pointed like those of a vampire bat or moth. The two rappers just

stood there confused for about thirty minutes. Looked more like a mini werewolf than a dog or something else entirely.

They started back towards the main road. Bloody and tired, they continued to walk. They were happy they had killed one of those dogs that Mr. Charles was talking about, but they wondered if there were more, and what in the hell was it in the first place?. The forest floor was covered in thick fog in some places they could barely see their feet as they walked. They patiently drug themselves forward depleted of energy and hungry. Jason pulled out a roll of cookies from the citgo, from his backpack and began to munch on them. They spotted a log on the side of the road that looked sturdy enough to hold the three of them. They approached the log slowly and sat down. They sighed in relief. “I can’t believe this is happening” said Jason. “What kind of ride buddy driver drops people off in the middle of nowhere, this is just crazy stuff man I swear? When I get home, my family is going to sue him for everything he has” “yeah that’s if we get home” replied Terrell ,concerned and depleted .

The night grew long, the three even contemplated finding a place to sleep, but it just seemed too dangerous. This forest was crawling with life. This place made the hood seem safe. Bats and birds filled the trees and deer seemed to be everywhere. In the distance Jason spotted a tent up in the hills off the side of the road! It could mean that they had finally made contact with someone. The two young men and Rockelle, decided to tread up into the darkness to see who could possibly be living in a tent in these dark creepy woods. After walking about 200 feet, up the hill they finally arrived at the tattered looking tent. “Jason cleared his throat and asked, “is anybody there??” they got no

response. As he looked closer at the tent he could see bloody hand marks all over it.

They finally got enough courage to walk in the already open tent. They carefully observed the entrance and walked in. They shined there light inside and saw multiple blankets and a plethora of small bags. Rockelle remained outside of the tent she could not stand the funky smell it had.

Terrell peeled back one of the blankets slowly only uncover a horrible sight. It was the rotting corpse of a man! It looked like he was screaming at the time of death. His hands and legs looked bitten off. Jason opened one of the man bags, in the tent they were filled with small food items and can goods he grabbed as many as his back pack could handle. The smell of the body was grotesque and distracting. Bloody hand prints filled the walls of the tent. There was an obvious struggle at the time of the man's death. Terrell happened to notice something hanging from the ceiling. It was an old paper rolled up tightly. He grabbed it and opened it up. It was a letter.

The letter read:

"I was taken here against my will, I don't think I have much longer to live. I have been here two days, there's something in these woods, they don't like campfires but I will soon run out of gasoline. I was kidnapped while hiking by an old man pretending to be a park ranger. If my body is ever found give me the peace of telling my

family. My name is Kevin Everett"

They were thrilled to find food but upset to learn that there were more dogs, and

even worse they were only a few of the victims in a string of disappearances carried out by one man.

They continued back down towards the road trying to process what they had just seen. They continued to walk, still hoping to see a neighborhood or any sign of conventional civilization.

Instead they were introduced to more yellow street lights and infinite dark forest filled with fog.

They continued to force themselves down the cold dark road that seemed boundless no street signs, bus tops houses or even a guard rail. They continued to hear trotting and the sound of branches breaking in the distance as they walked. They often heard the sound of deep breathing and panting but didn't visibly see anything. The street lights were bright and beaming however and they were the only sign of normalcy. "fuck this shit" Jason said out of anger. He grabbed a large rock in frustration from being stranded. He looked up at the lamp post and threw it as hard as he possibly could. The glass light shattered and crumbled to the ground flying into the street and surrounding grasses. "the hell you do that for." "mad that's all" he said kicking over branches and swearing. "bro look" "look at what" they both turned to see the street light glass picking itself up off the ground, and flying back towards the lamp post! In a matter of seconds the lamp had reconfigured itself and the light came back on. "whoa" what was that. I told you this was not a normal place Jason said. I got weird vibes the moment Charles dropped us off" he said before looking teary eyed and scared out of his young mind. The trotting started to come closer. They soon saw

shadows moving toward the street. The sound of the shattered light post attracted the coyotes! Before they knew it, in the distance they could see eight coyotes surrounding them in a circle. They all slowly moved forward trotting heads hanging low in a pouncing stance. They could see the large black fangs shining in the moon light. Suddenly the eyes of these beast began glowing red. "oh shit" said Terrell he began to pick up whatever he could find and started praying. One of the dogs, one of the larger of the group began running at him. Suddenly a roaring engine sound came over the top of hill in the back ground. It was a large semi truck. Seeing the light the

animals began to scatter into the woods. Terrell ran toward the side of the road and Jason just stood there in the middle of the street. “man get the hell out of the street!” Jason yelled. “ I want to but I can’t,” he said “I can’t move.” The truck accelerated the driver didn’t see him at all even though his lights were beaming. The truck ran right into Jason. “nooooooo!” his friend screamed from the sideline, closing his eyes in despair. The truck quickly cleared the area, the driver didn’t see him, as if he was not even visible.

Terrell ran to the street expecting to an invisible body but he didn’t he saw him standing there. “what happened.” I don’t know I didn’t feel anything he looked down at his hand and saw that if was partially transparent. He held it up in the air. It didn’t kill me because, we are some type of ghost!” “no don’t start this shit, we are not dead! Rockelle screamed, I can’t be dead I have some much more to do in my life, I was supposed to be rich I was supposed to be a superstar like Beyoncé, I don’t have time for this stuff, on everything I love I don’t.” she began to panic in a way they had never seen before up until this point she seemed emotionless and without fear or doubt or even thought sometimes. “chill” we are probably not dead, but somethings

going on because he was suppose to be road kill for real.

The DJ isn’t safe either ?

A day had already passed and they were growing tired. Three rookie rappers far from misty falls and much further from the stage they had just earned. There was no way to know exactly what time it was. The two had begun to simply wonder around picking wild nuts from bushed and trees for food. Often they would find whole pecans that were on the ground, however oddly, they didn’t resemble any nuts that they had ever eaten before. Every other mile, they would spot another nut tree. This time, Jason was up for the climbing. Terrell hoisted him on his shoulders and Jason tried to grab the nuts reaching into the tree, he felt something odd on the end of his

fingers. It felt like a shirt, and an arm. He moved the branches apart to see what was on the other side but didn't see anything. It felt like flesh to him. He finally decided to grab and pull on it. And when he did and the mysterious object fell to the ground and he fell with it.

He quickly got up, and dumped his self-off, when he did he noticed another guy lying on the ground, next to him breathing hard. How was this possible, they didn't see anything until he smacked into the ground? "Who are you? Don't tell me more strange demon crap" Jason and Terrell both asked at the same time." "I'm, DJ Lucien, big dawg, he said sweating and gasping for air." His chest bobbing up and down as he breathed "How in the world did we not see you sitting in the tree? ," "it's cuz, I was hiding fool." "he got up off the ground dusting himself off, let

me break it to you too, something is in this woods dawg, I've heard several people get mauled to death scream for they life, I never heard such cries for help and I used to live on the West side of Chicago. I didn't see it but I heard it."

"How were you not visible, you really expect us to believe that you were invisible, come one man tell the truth." Lucien pointed to a large blanket on the ground covered in leaves. "In a nutshell I learned to make camouflage, whatever those things are killing people, they can't see that well I think they have some type of heat vision or spirit vision, I been lost out here for weeks, on my third week I found a dead body wrapped in some weird and unusual clothes but they were all covered in sticky leaves , I found all kinds of strange things in the pockets, powders, jewelry and letters written in a language I have never seen before to keep it real, I don't who it was, but they had this blanket with them too, I thought it looked cool, so I put it on, then I saw another dude, who Charles dropped off, I spoke to him but he never responded or even looked at me, the last time I saw that dude the right left half of his leg was eaten off, his body was floating in the water. "What…..? Stop playing man" Jason responded are you sure? "One hundred, Lucien replied. "So how did you get here Terrell asked?' Rockelle stood back in the background trying to get her phone to get service she had already taken a hundred photos of the dog and Charles car.

“Man, it was a long story but I will tell it, Lucien sat down on the ground and started to roll up a joint. “let me hit that” Jason asked “got you” he replied. He also took a long weapon made of iron out of his pocket and sat it next to him. Lucien was big guy, tattooed with dreadlocks, despite his size had a friendly demeanor. He

was wearing designer clothes and shades hinting at his life style. I was sitting in a gas station smoking some weed, you know, trying to unwind a lil bit. I had just did two shows at club cheetah, everyone who knows me knows me as DJ Lucien, entrepreneur, Dj and all around hustler.” So anyway, I was at a Texaco, you know, smoking scrolling through my phone, when I spotted the police behind me. They rolled up lights flashing bright. I look in my rearview and a old man with a big hat is slowly walking towards me, he never raised his head, before I could roll down the window, he punched straight through the glass and yanked my door open. I tried to fight, but bruh, he looks old, but he is super strong. He hit me upside the head with a Billy club and I was out, everything was blurry I laid there staring at my gold tooth next to me. The last thing I remember was having handcuffs around my ankles and being drug into the back of police car bleeding. Two hours later, I woke up here, in these here woods. I had to saw off my foot cuffs, he never removed them, he must have hated me. Other than that, I couldn’t tell you why we are here or what his intention was to be honest.” “As far as proof goes,” “Now that’s crazy, said Terrell, dude ain’t lying.” “Who in the hell was the person wrapped in them garments. “I don’t know said Lucien, but this disguise sure has helped me avoid dying, like I said I haven’t seen it yet, but something is killing people, every-time I meet somebody, by the next week I find they corpse.” “Maybe you could travel with us, said the two,” “thanks but no thanks, I travel alone, I will be ok as long as I got this disguise, my boy, we couldn’t be that far from home they will come and find us, we live in the US, Misty falls will find us trust me.

The greatest country in the world, they will find us little bruh,

just sit tight.” Lucien officially began to walk off and disappeared into the night.”

Jason and Terrell were more concerned that he would be eaten at some point if those wolf like things smelled him.” In all the talking they forgot to tell him that they saw what was attacking the people that Charles dropped off. Five more hours had past, and it seemed hopeless. No matter how late it got, the sun never seemed to come up. “Look” Jason said he was pointing at a distant figure up ahead in the road. Terrell didn’t see what Jason was talking about at first. He had to squint multiple times to see the faint figure far ahead up the road. “I see it” he said it looks like a man standing there. The two young men began to scream “hello can you help us we are lost, please help us ” the man just sat there moving side to side as if he were trying to get a better look as well. He motioned them with his hands to come down the road. It looked like he was wearing a fire rescue suit but they couldn’t tell from that far away. They bolted up the road as fast as they possibly could. There was no doubt in their minds that he was part of some type of search crew that was looking for them. The closer they got they could definitely see it was a fire fighters suit that the man wore. The thrill of being found felt like instant bliss. The closer they got they could see the strange man was smiling. It was a good sign. They were more than ready to go home. In a shocking change of events, the man begin to run away from them. He was still waving for them to follow along.

They both thought that this was odd behavior but it was worth the risk. They continued to follow him anyway. “This is kind of weird don’t you think?” he whispered to Terrell. “Yeah I know, but maybe it’s some type of new rescue procedure he does have a fire uniform on that must mean something.” “Yea you’re right, I

guess said Jason, and they continued to follow the strange man Rockelle followed slowly behind she could not run in the heels, she eventually took them off. They continued to run for fifteen minutes and were beginning to get exhausted. The man suddenly made a quick turn and entered the woods. They were still skeptical but they were desperate. The man continued to run through a series of trees and the followed him blindly. Suddenly the man turned a corner and disappeared from view. In fear that they were moving to slow, they accelerated and ran towards the area where the man had turned. The two were instantly brought to a sudden stop, as they peered down at a huge cliff!

They were breathing heavily and tried to catch their breath. They looked down the steep cliff, with absolute fear in their eyes. Large jagged rocks lined the bottom of it. It was a long way down if they had fallen. They looked to their right and saw the man standing at the bottom of the cliff laughing! At this point it was obvious this man was trying to lead them to their early death, with their own desperation and it was also obvious that he was not a member of the search and rescue crew. The man started to walk away, and suddenly just disappeared. He simply faded into the shadows. Jason began rubbing his eyes to see if he had saw what happened clearly. “Did you see that” he said to Terrell “yeah I saw it” he replied but I can’t allow myself to believe it.

Regardless of what just happened, their vitality was running critically low. They were exhausted and sleep was no longer capable of being ignored. They continued back towards the main road slowly. Rockelle trailed behind silently looking at her phone. “I’m sleepy said Jason.” “No way don’t even try it said Terrell, we will be eaten alive by those weird coyotes. “What if we

sleep under a pile of branches where they can’t see us suggested Jason.” “Terrible idea what are have you been smoking?” Terrell replied. Dogs can smell really well they will still find us.” “What if we sleep high up in the trees? I never seen a dog climb a tree” said Jason. This was an idea Terrell could not easily dismiss. “That’s not a bad idea” he responded. The two agreed it was safer than being mauled to death on the ground. They began to scan the forest for a huge tree that would hold them and their bags without breaking. After walking 45 minutes they encountered the ideal candidate. It was a giant oak tree that looked to be 100 years old. It had huge sturdy braches that made almost the perfect base for a tree house. They made hammocks from material found in the tents. “Rockelle had a separate hammock in the same tree , she was paranoid about there smells and desperately needed a shower. It was high off the ground and perfectly safe. The howling continued and continued. It produce a frightening tone for the night. It wasn’t long before they were sleep. Around the city a search crew looked for them tirelessly but no evidence was ever found only a few word of mouth witnesses. Mrs. T. continued to look for son as often as she could on

her few days off. She even quit her second job to look for his as often as she could. She didn’t want to accept that her baby boy was gone, not a trace, no body no nothing.

Back in the city

There was extensive man hunt for the two missing young men all over the city. Their posters where everywhere and two seasoned police had been assigned to the case. Officer Murphy a veteran male officer, and Officer Shaw and young female investigator had been assigned as private investigators, to look into the untimely disappearance of the Ride Buddy riders and the driver, Mr. Charles. At eleven thirty seven at night, they arrived at Hallowell highway, where the Ride buddy computer says Charles last showed up on the tracker before vanishing off radar. When they approached they noticed something strange on the street in front of them. Officer Shaw hopped out and snapped a photo while squatting close the ground to get a better look. There were red glowing tire tracks on the ground! Streaking up the street and disappearing after about two hundred feet up the highway “what on earth are those?” Shaw asked. “I don’t know” Murphy responded “tire tracks maybe”, its evidence but it sure is weird.

He leaned down with a pair of black rubber gloves, and used a piece of plastic to scoop some of the substance into a zip lock bag for laboratory testing, and labeled it evidence with a marker. The story just seemed to get stranger as Jason’s mom Ms. T, sat in the back seat distraught while she saw them look for her son who had missing for more than a day.

Darnell joins the crew.

The phone rang loudly on the top of the diamond tip coffee table.

The studio was crowded as usual with wannabe entertainers who spent more than they brought in. it was payday and that meant chaos. “hello” who is it now” Darnell said. ‘Man I swear, the show is in ten days where the hell are they?” the message slowly came on interrupting his speech. It’s me Jason he said breathing heavily. Man we stranded!” The Ride buddy app dropped us of in a dog kennel. I don’t know where we are but we not in the city anymore man and that’s the truth ! help, you got to come find us.” As the phone hang up he heard a sudden howling in the back ground a strange howl unlike any dog in the hood. “man what have I gotten myself into” Darnell said cover his face and taking a sip of juice from the bar.” He knew he had to do something but he didn’t quite know what to do exactly. Where on earth were they? Why did they take a ride buddy driver, why on earth were dogs in the back ground, and why did he say dog kennel? Darnell decided to back track he decided that he would go trace their last footsteps, in time and see what happened . His prized rappers were gone he had to replace them , but what if they returned.

Carlos the saint?

Alone in the room, darkness surrounded him the only light came from his PlayStation. Gripping the controller firmly he twisted his wrist back and forth aggressively playing the game he and his brother used to play together. He was on his way to college next year, a scholarship that could have only come from basketball, he was grateful and often said it, at six foot five the schools were begging him, but it wasn't the same. Carlos couldn't stand the idea that his brother Jason was missing and no one was doing enough to find him. He dreaded the call that they would find him dead in some river or worse buried out in the middle of nowhere. He grabbed a basketball from the corner of the bed and bounced it against the wall. He couldn't stop pondering all the while looking at the picture of he and his brother Jason on the wall. What on earth could have happened? He thought to himself? The only suspect was the Ride Buddy Driver and the police had given them a picture of the car and his license plate, Carlos kept the picture in his wallet at all-times, just in case he came across the creepy bastard that took his brother. The door to the room slowly opened and his mother Mrs. Carol peeped her

head in, "you ok boo, I know it's been hard" "yea ma, I'm cool I'm just tired of good for nothing police, they can never really do anything to help" "I understand baby" Carol responded. " I just don't want you to take matters until your own hands, she slowly walked into the room and placed a small box on the bed and opened it , revealing a small hand gun that had been ordered online with Carlo's name on it. "that's not mine" "you don't have to act baby, I know its yours, well really it's mine now, you don't need this, you don't want to end up like your cousin Gary with 25 year life sentence baby. Believe me I know you love your brother but it's not worth it." "yea you right he said before giving her the box and hugging her." She quietly left the room and closed the door lightly before reminding him dinner was at six.

He opened up his closet and grabbed a bat, he loved his mom but he never really did what she told him. Carlos pondered all night about how he could find the car that took his brother, he knew the area that they were last seen at, and he knew how many hustlers and strange people frequented that area of the highway and that neighborhood by the grave yard was one his hooping spots. At three Carol was sound asleep and he decided to sneak out. Carlos was a senior in his high school and he had his own car. He quietly closed the front door before locking it and ran to his car and quickly backed out of the driveway with no head lights. He drove an hour across town to the bus-stop near the grave yard. At 4:00 am he arrive and slowly parked on the side of the road with his lights off. “if I ever see this bas**** he is Going to get it, you old pervert.’ He said with his fenced clinched, his gun had been taken but he still had a decent sized based ball bat and some brass knucks.

For a few minutes he saw nothing. It was dark and windy and a small car passed by. Then a few more vehicles zoomed through the dark neighborhood. He finally decided to take off he wasn’t seeing anything and it was getting late, besides what were the odds of seeing the old Cadillac again. Finally Carlos turned on the radio baseball bat on the seat. He drove a mile to the nearest shell gas station. When he rolled in he noticed two cars in the lot. A small pickup up truck, obviously the cashiers car and a large Cadillac sitting next to the pump. He quickly searched through his wallet and pulled out the photo of the car, it was an identical match! Carlos put on some shades from his dashboard and quickly got out to look at the man’s tag, it was an identical match! He couldn’t not believe what he was seeing. He had to think fast. He didn’t want the man to see him. Should he call the police. He reached for his phone and realized the battery was dead. He couldn’t stand the thought of this evil old man getting away so he ran back to his car and continued to think. “I got it, I’m going to follow his as-, this old as-creep has to live somewhere.” He said in low tone of voice. So Carlos ducked low in the car, just as Charles exited the store holding a large black full of stuff. He quickly walked to the pump and began pumping the gas as if he was just a normal guy deranged and crazy to say the least he didn’t seem bothered at all. After a few minutes Charles closed the cap and hopped in pulling out of the gas station and speeding up the street.

Carlos slowly pulled out of the gas station and slowly trailed behind him. Carlos

trailed behind him for at least thirty minutes, he was now in a part of town that he had never really seen before. It was extremely dark and he often saw abandoned houses. He often got this weird creepy feeling that something

was in his car watching him. He often looked behind him but didn't see anything. Finally up ahead he saw the Cadillac the Charles was driving turn off at an old abandon church and park in a rocky driveway on the side of the road. The neighborhood barely had any street lights or stop signs. He pretended to be a normal driver and rolled pass the church once he saw Charles enter the building and close the door. "I got you sucker" Carlos said before laughing. He pulled up the street and stopped the car a block from the church and began to roll a joint laughing the entire time. "some old goofy kidnapper is going to get his ass kicked" he pulled out some red bulls from his dashboard and began drinking them. he looked at himself in his mirror, "how in the hell do I end up doing crazy shit like this?" he said before laughing. He looked down at his jersey and tennis shoes and began to tie his hair in a ponytail. He turned the car around, headlights off, he was really eager, even though he knew it was a chance that Jason was already gone. He slowly rolled into the driveway as quietly as he could. The window looked dark. He got out the car leaving the door open, he didn't want Charles to hear the door shut. He slowly walked up to the door and knocked. "is anybody home." He held the bat behind him as he smiled asking politely. Charles walked to the door perplexed, who on earth would be on his doorstep at this time of night? Charles opened the door and Carlos swung immediately like he was Derek Jeter. Charles caught the bat in his hands and the battle began. "who in the hell are you?" "I'm here to get my damn brother Jason back" he said sweating and grunting. Charles continued to act dumb, and unaware of what he had done. "I don't know nobody named Jason you nutcase." Calm down let me talk to you. "you can talk to my damn bat" "I'm done damn talking" they continued to fight knocking over furniture in the old church. Carlos was a large kid,

really an adult about to graduate. Finally the tussle shifted in Carlos's favor when Charles tripped on a chair leg. He fell backwards and bumped his head on a lamp. "that's right" Carlos said sweating and laughing. "pick on somebody your own size,

now where is my da--brother?” Carlos grabbed a rope hanging on the wall and began to tie Charles up as he arose stumbling from the floor.” A twist a fate had occurred, Charles was now being held hostage by a basketball player! Carlos walked around and switched on the lights still holding the bat. “now where’s my da-n brother !” “I don’t know fool!” Carlos then took the bat and smashed the coffee table. Carlos began walking around the old church looking for Jason, eyes teary fearing he would find a dead body at any moment. After searching the hold building he found nothing but ton of alcohol bottles and papers with people’s names on it scattered everywhere. He also found a ride buddy driver badge hidden under a pile of trash with Charles name on it. “ I thought you said you didn’t drive for ride buddy, old man.

He then walked to Charles and swung the bat into Charles leg. Shockingly Charles didn’t scream. “what you think you tuff?

Carlos said he then swung again and Charles didn’t even budge he even started smiling. Carlos was now creeped out, this old man appearing to be seventy or eighty wasn’t being hurt by a baseball bat? Nonetheless he still had him hostage. “Give me your phone old man, I’m calling the police!” “it’s over there on the couch, Charles said with ease and no fear?” he quickly started to dial 911, while waiting on the operator, he noticed a large clock on the wall. The clock was strange it was full of unknown symbols and people’s names underneath them, it’s like Charles was counting down to something but Carlos didn’t know what? Finally the operator picked up “hello can I help you, yes mam, joy ran through he his body, he was finally going to get the

guy who took his brother, I’m at an old church on Bankhead drive and I found a man who has kidnapped my brother, his call was quickly interrupted by the distinct sound of growling! He slowly turned around, anxiously and nervous. When he finally looked up he saw a large black dog standing right in front of Charles chair. Charles was gone. Many thoughts ran through his head, did this old as man just turn into a large black dog? The dog eyes shined red and Carlos gripped his bat tighter. The dog turned towards the window and leapt up towards it shattering the glass . It took off running into the pitch black woods. Charles had just escaped! “ he sat there holding his bat phone in hand staring at the shattered glass, Carlos the saint had come so close to making the evil man that took his brother pay. The next day the police arrive

to the location Carlos had given them and the window was broken and blood was on the chair from Charles.

They collected the samples. But the strangest thing happened with the car. It was still out front. Oddly it appeared way older than it did when he seen it pull in. vines grew all around it as if it had been there for years, but Carlos knew that was impossible he had just seen it drive in the night before, it was obvious, it was black magic and that was no man he battled with in the church.

G-boy and J-ride the new recruits

Leo and Mike were two young rappers hungry and ready for action . They had fire in their rhymes and dreams bigger than the city skyline, attractive and bold they knew there big break was inevitable. They waited nervously in a fancy office twisting their

chains around. The air smelled like expensive leather and old money. This was Darnell's office. Darnell was a new manager in the music business. He made stars shine bright, or he made them disappear.“Come in,” a deep voice boomed. “it's about time yall made it in”Leo and Mike straightened their jackets eyes big with a smile . They walked into the room. Darnell sat behind a huge wooden desk leaning back in his chair . He looked like a statue carved from stone, unmoving and powerful. Two empty chairs faced him.“Welcome, boys,” Darnell said. His eyes scanned them quickly, like a doctor checking vital signs. “You know why you're here. Guapo and Bhugatti are gone. “Poof” “don't ask how or why they just are”. Seven months ago. No note, no call. Just silence.

The label needs a new sound. They need replacements, fast.”Leo swallowed hard. Guapo and Bhugatti were quickly becoming legends. Their disappearance was still the biggest mystery in the rap scene. Everyone whispered about curses or debt collectors or angry homies.“We're ready to work, they the past we the present” Leo said arrogantly. Mr. Darnell,” Mike said, trying to sound confident.Darnell slid two

thick folders across the desk. “Good.

The contract is simple. You take over their next big single, ‘Let the Beat Drop.’ You’ll perform it for the next year. Hit after hit. No mistakes. You sign here, here, and here.”Leo picked up the papers. The ink on the contract looked dark, almost black. He flipped the pages quickly. The terms were tough, but the money was life-changing. He felt a strange chill as his pen touched the paper. It felt like signing away more than just time.Mike signed first, his hand shaking a little. Then Leo followed. As the ink dried, Darnell gave a small, tight smile.“Welcome to the big time,” Darnell said. “Now go celebrate. You earned it. The after-party is downtown. Don’t be late.”Leo and Mike left the building in a daze. They had done it. They were official.They drove Leo’s

old, loud car downtown. The city lights blurred into streaks of color. They pulled up to a huge penthouse party. Music thumped so hard the ground vibrated.Inside, the party was wild.

Champagne flowed. Leo spotted two girls near the balcony, Maya and Chloe. Maya had electric blue hair, and Chloe laughed easily. They were beautiful and seemed happy to see the new rappers in town. They spent the next few hours talking, laughing, and dancing. The music was loud, the air thick with excitement. Leo felt invincible.Around 2 AM, Mike checked his phone. “We should head back. Early studio session tomorrow.”Leo agreed, though he didn't want the night to end. Maya and Chloe walked them to the car.“Text us?” Chloe asked, giving Mike her number on a napkin.“Definitely,” Leo promised Maya, holding her hand a second too long.As they merged onto the freeway, the party fog started to lift. The road was mostly empty now. This was a night the two new youngsters would never forget.“Man, we made it,” Mike sighed happily, leaning back.Then, Leo saw it.Up ahead, a massive black truck materialized out of the darkness of the freeway. It had no lights on, yet it filled Leo’s rearview mirror completely. It looked like a shadow given metal form.“Whoa, what is that guy doing?” Leo gripped the wheel tight. “slow down nut job” he said fixing his chain.The truck didn't slow down. It sped up, closing the gap instantly and aggressively . Leo swerved slightly, trying to move to the right lane. It was dangerous but Leo had fast reflexes.The truck matched his move perfectly, its huge grille inches from Leo’s bumper. Leo slammed on the brakes, causing the car

to fishtail. Smoke went all over the place. “what the heck is he doing?” one of the girls said.“He’s trying to run us off!” Mike yelled, his earlier joy replaced by terror.Leo risked a glance into the side mirror at the driver’s cabin. That’s when his blood turned to ice. Through the heavily tinted window,

he saw two points of light staring back. They weren't headlights. They were deep, burning red, glowing with an unnatural intensity—like embers in a furnace.“Mike, look!” Leo whispered, his voice cracking.Mike turned, saw the glow, and gasped, clapping a hand over his mouth.“The Night Buddy Drivers,” Mike breathed, remembering the news reports from last month— stories of reckless drivers on the freeway, never caught, known only for their glowing eyes and violent tendencies. They were rumored to be more than just bad drivers; people said they were something else entirely.The truck surged forward again. Leo floored the gas pedal. The small car roared, trying to outrun the monster behind them. The truck didn't just chase; it stalked, maintaining that terrifying closeness.Suddenly, the truck swerved hard to the left, not trying to pass, but trying to smash them off the road entirely. Leo reacted instantly, cranking the wheel right. The car scraped the concrete barrier, sparks flying, the sound deafening.They shot past an exit ramp. The truck kept pace, its engine screaming a tortured sound that wasn't quite mechanical.Leo saw a chance. A slow-moving sedan was in the lane ahead. If he could cut behind it, maybe the truck would have to brake or crash into the other car.He jerked the wheel left, squeezing between the sedan and the center divider. He made it.Mike looked back. The black truck didn't slow for the sedan.

Instead, it rammed the rear of the sedan with shocking force. The sedan spun out wildly, flipping over twice before crashing into the guardrail in a shower of broken glass.The black truck didn't stop to look. It roared past the wreckage, still locked onto Leo’s tailpipe. Those glowing yellow eyes like a fiery demon in the moon light. Seemed brighter now, filled with malevolent triumph. It was one of those voodoo things the news kept covering. “NIGHT BUDDY” drivers is what the news people

called them demon possessed road rage stalkers that only come out late at night with no police they were hard to catch, some would simply pretend to be normal

people when caught.Leo pushed the car past its limit, his knuckles white on the steering wheel. He didn’t care about the studio anymore. He just needed to survive the night, realizing that Darnell might have signed them up for more than just a music contract; he might have delivered them right to something ancient and hungry on the asphalt.

Nightmare at Walmart

The city was under siege, and Charles the shadow of an old man, was the one doing the sieging. He prowled daily the hoods of Misty Falls ,looking for souls to snatch innocent unsuspecting victims to add to his diabolical inventory. They were usually young dumb and full of life, however the old were easy prey as well. He would pretty much snatch any one he could get. A ferocious predator pretending to be an old man, it was a perfect guise. No one would think a seventy something year old driver could be a nightmarish reaper with the intent of enslaving humanity. A spectral entity with bad attitude. He even got compliments on how unnaturally charming he was and how

handsome he was. He was common face around the city but only at night oddly. A few neighborhood kids even called him Cadillac man. He stayed in the shadows, hidden, unseen most of the time. He frequented an old church on buckhead drive , which was his usual hang out spot, he lived there planned there and thrived there.

He was suspicious to some and to some local police, but they never saw him do anything so eventually he became a normal fixture in the neighborhood, no different than a crack head or prostitute who only comes out at night.

It was 1:30 am in the west side of the city and Cody B. Hall was closing the doors for the night at the local neighborhood Walmart. Coby was quirky guy a big fan of battle rap and often spent many hours watching rap battles on his phone. He pulled out a checklist from his pocket and looked around the room before going to the office to grab the keys. He wasn't the store manager, but he had been selected to be the closing manager.

Cody's area was electronics, he managed video games. They were his specialty. He was a full time gamer and a part time Walmart employee. Five feet from the office, Cody turned to face the night duty security officer who was supposed to stay the night in the parking lot. His name was Big Mosley, he was a large and bitter guy. He had worked that Walmart for six years, he was notorious for over doing his job, and had even been in the news for violent encounters, never the less for some reason he was never terminated, some even praised him for keeping the theft down. "I'm going to Texaco to get some grub, I start in thirty minutes." Mosely announced to Cody. 'Cool whenever you're ready, I am almost done locking up everything up." He said before tapping him on the shoulder. Big Mosely quietly exited through the back door. Moments later, Cody could see his

security car slowly rolling out of the parking lot. Shortly after, he began locking the front doors, when he did, he noticed a long Cadillac sitting in the middle of the parking lot motionless no lights. He began waving to the customer to signal that Walmart was done for the night but the man didn't seem to respond, he simply sat there with his hands on the wheel staring straight forward in the darkness. He simply went back inside and continued to lock the doors assuming the man was drunk. He noticed he dropped something from his pocket and turned to pick it up slowly. In the reflection of the object, he saw a man standing right by the door. He turned quickly and his hair stood up on the back of his neck. The man was right in front of the door! He leaned in to try and pull the door up and the man reached in. At this point he knew the man had bad intentions, he immediately grabbed his walky- talky and

began calling Big Mosely. “got a break Mosely, do you copy” ‘got you” Mosely responded. “where at?” “the front door hurry”. The man grabbed Cody’s arm and at that moment he could feel that the Man’s arm was ice cold. Cold enough to be dead. He leaned in grinning with a sinister smirk and slowly pushed the door open. His eyes were dark with no white. That was the first thing Cody noticed. “this is illegal Cody shouted.” “you wasting your time bro we don’t carry money inside” he said before searching for his Taser, Cody was a 1fiftey pound glasses wearing black guy from Idaho, the last thing he wanted was to do hand to hand combat with a strange homeless person or worse. Charles pulled out a small black wire and attempted to grabbed Cody’s wrist. The two began to struggle and Cody ended up on the floor. Looking around for his glasses he could barely see. He could not find his glasses but he could locate his taser. Sweaty and terrified he pulled his taser out. The lights began to go on and off to worsen the problem.

And finally they went out. “oh shit” “no f******* way” Cody thought to himself. Now he could only hear breathing he could feel Charles in front of him but he could not tell where. They both swung in the dark. Cody often threw stuff around the room trying to distract Charles of his location. Finally Charles grabbed Cody and he screamed as loud as he could. “help!” at that point he could hear Big Mosley coming in through the back door but he could hear him complaining about the lights as well. Charles finally wrapped the wire around Cody’s left hand and Cody drove the Taser into Charles right shoulder. He could hear the demonic scream as the voltage entered his body. The lights suddenly came on. Charles dropped to the floor shaking. Cody stood over him sweating and shaking and it was at that moment he noticed Charles had hooves for feet and goat legs! His trench coat and hat had come off and he noticed small horns on his for head. “what in the hell is this shit!” Cody said before picking up his glasses off the floor. He pulled out his phone and started to stream it on face book live shaking the entire time. Charles eyes grew wide, he didn’t want to be exposed he hopped up to his feet and took off running towards the door. Shots fired from the back the store. It was big Mosely. Charles waves his hand in a circle while running and the bullet all seemed to go right around his body , like some type of dark shield. They struck the lights food, sodas and the glass, they hit everything but Charles ! Charles high tailed it the parking lot and jumped in. “what do we do ?” Cody asked Mosely?” “shit, follow him I guess, catching a monster got to be worth some serious

money.” “right he said laughing” they both hopped in Mosely’ security car and followed Charles out of the parking lot. They bobbed and weaved through traffic tailing the large car but never seem to could catch up with him totally, it almost seemed like an illusion. Finally Charles

turned off on a side road by a large park and lake. They followed right behind him Mosley shooting at Charles tires. Eventually Charles sped up and while in the middle of the moon light the car turned into a shadow right in front of them and disappeared! Cody and Mosely hopped out immediately to see where he could have gone. It was a dead end and the area was surrounded by a lake he couldn’t have possibly drove in. they were forced to believe what they saw. Mosely kneeled down to stare at the red glowing tracks on the street left by what looked like a normal old Cadillac.

A kids house Too Charles?

Charles was a monster who would not stop is appetite for innocent was insatiable and deplorable but he was a beast not a human , but to most he didn’t even exist at least to the neighborhood people he didn’t, they heard stories about a man that locals called the Cadillac man but most thought it was joke. He was a demon, a reaper, with no regard for who he would take

- whether asleep, awake, or dead. It wasn’t personal he was demon who wanted freedom from hell by collecting souls one at a time and he was shameless in his undertakings with this task.

It was about 2:30 in the morning, and sixteen-year-old Michael

Blackwell was sitting on his couch, engrossed in playing a video game. He had stayed up past curfew many times before and he was doing it again tonight. “Michael Maurice Blackwell, take your ass to sleep child” his mother yelled from upstairs. ‘ I will I just got to wrap this up ma, I promise.” He continue to tap the joy-stick to his PlayStation and couldn’t resist the feverish light of the screen, continuously scarfing down leftover pork chops from earlier that night he sipped cherry sodas and just kept on playing. Suddenly, he noticed that the sliding door was open, a cool draft wrapped around him and lowered the temperature of the room, leaves reached the couch and flurried into the living room, he got up slowly and angrily and pulled the slide door shut, he then went and sat down and continued to play the game . After five minutes of play he heard it open back up on its

own and slide open! No matter how many times he tried to close it, it kept opening over and over again, letting in the cold night air. Frustrated, Michael went to inspect the door, but he saw nothing unusual. “man I am tired of these crackheads around here” he said red-faced, he was heated he knew junkies frequented backyards of the neighborhoods and that’s probably who was doing it. He locked it again, but to his shock, it opened once more.Feeling a chill run down his spine, Michael grabbed a flashlight and cautiously stepped outside. “man get your druggie ass out of our yard!” he yelled. He was steal trying to be slightly quiet due to his curfew violation. A voice whispered in the darkness, beckoning him to come closer. ‘come here Michael’ Trembling with fear, he followed the voice around the corner to tell the junkie about himself, and came face to face with a menacing figure dressed in a tattered trench coat - the demon known as Charles. Before him stood a man in a long black coat and a hood his face could not be seen although his eyes shined in

the moon light, one thing Michael could see were the small horns on his head. That dark faithful night Michael Blackwell was never seen again !

Finding Brandon?

By now at least two months had passed, two hard months for Carlos. His brother was gone without a trace, the empty silence of the house haunted him daily. His mother, Mrs. T, often told him that things would get better but for him, it was never fast enough. He wanted revenge or his brother back there was no grey area in his thinking. Friday evening Carlos sat on the sofa watching the football game. In between commercials he would sip a red bull and roll up a joint. He had to stay high to deal with all of the craziness. The police visits, being on the news and ultimately the fact that his brother could be dead. While a commercial about the Bell view hotel, he suddenly remembered something. The investigator said that his brother and friend Terrell were last seen riding with a guy named Brandon for work. He knew where his brother worked and it seemed really easy to at least, if not more, go and question this shady cat. In his mind he was doing his duty to a possible dead brother. The next day Carlos drove to the Bell View Hotel and walked to the guest counter. “Is Brandon in today?” he asked trying to look professional. A small woman answered him. “no as a matter of

fact he is not, he is off, but I think he has a second job at the mall, Rollo’s pizza is I believe what it’s called, yeah it’s the pizza joint at the downtown mall. Maybe you could find him there.” “ why are you looking for him?” Carlos had to think of an excuse on the fly. “oh nothing, I had a special delivery for him that’s all.” “but thanks for the info,” nervously he walked out of the building as fast as he could. An hour later Carlos arrived at the downtown mall after taking thirty minutes to find a parking spot. He walked into the crowded mall and began looking for a sign that said Rollo’s Pizza. After searching for just five minutes he saw it. He walked in immediately. At the register he used the same excuse claiming to be making a delivery. The manager

on duty pointed him to the kitchen in the pizza making area. He walked in without being invited, it was typical of Carlos hot headed personality. In the back of room stood a young guy tall and serious looking, he looked to be the same age as Carlos or close. “are you Brandon?” “yeah how did you get back here?” “where’s my brother, the cops said he was last seen with you.” “I don’t know, the last I saw him was at the bus stop, now leave before I get security!” ‘I don’t give two flying f***** about security, where is he!” Carlos demanded. “I don’t have to tolerate this” Brandon responded. He took of his chef jacket and tried to evacuate to the bathroom, however Carlos followed suit right behind him.

Standing in the guy’s bathroom, Brandon turned around shocked to see Carlos standing there. “are you crazy fool” Brandon shouted. “ I will kick your ass!” “that’s exactly what I want,” Carlos responded. “All I need is an excuse.” Carlos swung and the two began to fight. Punching and kicking they yelled at each other until Carlos got the better of Brandon pushing him up to the wall by his collar. “now where is he.” With a busted lip

Brandon just laughed. “oh this is funny huh, you must want some more?” Carlos said furiously. Brandon put his head down and went motionless for a few seconds. “don’t tell me your weak ass is dead, I got enough problems” he slowly raise his head up and opened his eyes. His eyes were filled with anger and began to glow read! “what in the hell” Brandon thought, don’t tell me another demon. “that’s right idiot” “there are many of us,” he said in a deep growling voice, Charles isn’t the only demon trying to escape hell, by the year 2032 we will have this entire ratchet city on lock, that’s right we will own punks like you!” “as for that idiot brother of yours he is never coming back” “and just for the info Charles is my father, he has seeded many offspring, this world is innocent that’s why we are here, we are the new human race you will be replaced.” Carlos cocked his hand back to throw another punch. Simultaneously Brandon grabbed his hand and held it in mid-air. Carlos felt his hand starting to heat up like it was in front of a furnace. It got so hot he had to pull his hand loose. “what the heck” Carlos fell to the floor clutching his hand. Brandon took the opportunity to make a break for it, he had already had one but whooping by Carlos. He disappeared out of the restroom and vanished from the building.

Traymone The Menace

(Language filtered)

“kill em quick, getting rich, mark niggas hating on me cuz I’m riding on your b****, I’m a killa” traymone removes his head phones still repeating the lyrics. Traymone was a nightmare of a personality according to anyone you would ask, feared respected and despised by the police he had gotten away with two known murders. His father from the badlands of Nigeria and his mother from Detroit he was the inevitable offspring of gangsters and sophisticated crime. He was known for his slick gear and flagrant outfits and jewelry, everyone knew he was an abusive boyfriend and a dangerous drug dealer, he ran the Winwood Heights area. He was not a pretty guy, downright ugly and an ugly attitude to match. He was known for is crazy tattoos of skulls all over his face. Having an impressive physique from his days of super athlete in high school his appearance scare many and he was known for giving people a but whooping they would never forget.

Its twelve o’clock, the light of the moon shined brightly on the corner of the Winwood Heights apartment complex. “man where the money at, for real it’s the first of the month and no body ain't buying nothing. He quickly searched through is

expensive jeans for drugs. Sliding back his chair on the porch he decided to walk to the convenience store. Luckies quick stop grocery and package store was plagued with problems. Fourteen minutes of walking and smoking he arrived at the corner store to pick up money from young dealers who worked around the

store. His Samsung rang loudly and received a message saying missed called. He knew he was supposed to make a drug delivery at a parking lot of an old construction sight just off the freeway. He had killed many and didn't apologize for it, he saw it as a way of life, dog eat dog it's how he saw it. He worshipped gangsters and had no respect for women children or anybody for that matter. He was a life sentence just waiting to happen and he didn't give a f--k. "Bdog, where my money man, he said taking off his headphones once again. "Bdog was a 19 year old drug dealer who looked at Traymone like he was a trap god. A five foot seven light skin guy who was known for his weapons deals. He was loyal, and made lots of money selling weed drugs and other types of stolen merchandise. "Bdog had a new born baby and a side business cutting hair in the down town area. The letter B In Bdog came from barber. He had just graduated from barber college and walked around with a pair of clippers in his back pocket.

"bro, stuff , been slow really I don't know what's going on" He muttered before handing him a wad of cash.

"yea I feel you, same over there in the heights, just keep pushing and tell tango to call me he still ain't gave me the number to the dude who was going to hook up my rims." "For sho I'm on it" matter of fact roll with me when I make this drop off."

"cool let me let Tay-vo know I'm gone"

Bdog and Traymone walked back to Traymone's crib. Bdog jumped into Traymones

beautiful purple escalade truck.

Traymone went inside to tell his girl, Angie he was gone. “I’m out” he said bluntly.

“no wait I wanted to tell you the kids need some more school clothes”

“tell them they need a job” he said before grabbing a large bottle of liquor out the fridge. “really, what the fuck” she said tossing a bowl of food at him. “remember the light skin nigga with the curly hair at the basketball court I caught you with, remember the nigga a the auto shop I caught you with, remember the short airport nigga with the dreads I caught you with Jackie!, think about that shit when you come talk to me about some school clothes. He shook it off and walked out the house. Traymone believed his kids were lazy, and should hustle instead of begging, he was a deranged and narcissistic father.

Thirty eight minutes later after a quick and breezy ride to the construction site. He rolled into the parking lot. They sat in the truck smoking weed listening to a mix tape the Traymone’s nephew had made.

“man this a crazy looking area” bdog noticed. “yea spooky shit” big tray said before laughing

The area was dark except for parking lot lights and the eerie

looking trees looked alive in the glow of the moon light. Cut off from the main road the area just looked haunting. A black lake glowed from the moon next to the old concrete lot.

“so who we meeting”

“same guy I always meet, he drives a small black kia, you will know him when you see him.

An hour went by and they didn’t see the kia. He texted the guy and he told him that he was on his way he had a strange delay.

Traymone opened up his beer an began to gulp it down. His diamond rings and gold chain shining in the light of his digital stereo.

“you strapped right”

“of course I am, Bdog responded removing lifting his shirt and revealing his glock nine. Suddenly in his rear view he sees a old Cadillac rolling in the back lot.

“man what the fuck, who is this” Traymone replied.

The car slowly circled the lot. And rolled in a circle before stopping right in front of them. Two hundred feet away sat a large white car with its head light beaming.

“grab your piece, nigga I don’t know who this is.”

“on it, bdog said excited”

The car rolled forward slowly, however they could not see who was driving. Bdog couldn’t hold it anymore, he pulled out his glock and starting blasting. “pow, pow, pow,pow” four shots into the windshield of the car. Smoke from the loud hand gun simmered into the night are.

Traymone began to giggle.

“right pu*** nigga, doing weird as- shit, times up”

The cars lights went off and the head lights died. And then suddenly they came back on and the car surged straight forward crashing into them, boom! The car rocked the escalade and it shook and wobbled and bdog and Traymone scrambled around inside. “sh-t, sh-t, sh-t” bdog yelled pissing his paints on impact. The air bags knocked out Traymones gold teeth. A Tall old man hopped out the car carrying an ax and a rope. He stood there for a second looking down at the ground not revealing his face.

When his head rose they could see he was grinning with joy. “wow this old a-- nigga is bold.”

“who the f--k bring an ax to a gun fight.”

Traymone tilted back his seat and grabbed an ak from the floor board of the large vehicle. When he grabbed the door. A thunderous strike form the ax shattered the driving window.

Bdog began screaming “ oh shit, oh shit, oh shit.” “don’t scream nigga shoot b****!”

‘bdog began to shoot, one of the rogue bullets grazed Traymones shoulder but a couple of them did hit Charles and he fell to the ground.

“good shot, but you shot me too nigga”

“my bad, bruh I aint never been this damn nervous, I didn’t think we was going to meet mother fucking Jason vorhees nigga, you should have told be this shit.”

“right, Traymone said before laughing. “but he dead Jason vorhees now bi--h.’

Traymone got out of the car and began walking towards him. “this old a** man must be out of his mind.”

He picked Charles up and punched him in the face and that was his first mistake.

The shot was hard knocking Charles four feet.

“b***** nigga, that’s what I’m on, I’m from Detroit b****!”

Charles got up and the raised his hands dropping the axe.”

The two scared off for four minutes, but the large athletic Traymone got the better of Charles in the boxing match even knocking him to the gound again.

“let me get this nigga” bdog shouted. “no I got this one one he said laughing.”

“Traymone began dragging Charles disoriented body towards the black clear lake next to the gravel filled lot as bdog watched with his arms in hand.

“you met a real killer today bdog yelled while dragging him towards the cold body of water. He began spitting on him repeatedly and when at the water’s edge, he took off Charles hat and saw the old weird skin almost like scales of snake, on top of his hair he stopped and paused in confusion. He quickly got over it thinking it was some type of disorder. He began to grab Charles by the back of the head and started trying to shove him in the cold freezing water. Out of the blue Charles grabbed his leg and began holding on to his leg.

“nall don’t beg now he said before laughing”

Charles raised his head. He noticed his eyes were glowing like fire.”

“what the hell is this, he said before pausing with a blank stare.”

“times up, I’m from hell bitch!” he said before bursting out in laughter.

It was then he saw the black horns on his head and the claws on his hands his face had even changed, a black gargoyle like visage he looked absolutely frightening.

Traymone began to scream, “hell nall what the f*** is this shit.”

He pointed his ak47 at Charles and the bullets didn’t work. The clip was suddenly empty and he didn’t even use but a few rounds, it was literally impossible, like black magic impossible. He went to strike Charles with his fist and then began to notices and intense heat building up in his legs, and incinerating heat that felt like a thousand degrees. The flames erupted in a bright flurry around his legs. “Traymone screamed in agony,”

“not yet Charles said.” Before pushing him the cold waters. To cool him off. Charles knew he was taking him he didn’t want to kill him directly.

Watching from the lot, bdog hopped out of the wrecked truck blasting. He ran as fast as he could to the lake his paints falling down slowed down by heavy boots and shameless amounts of jewelry. Breathing heavily he arrived at the lake. Charles walked into the light eyes glowing horns shining, the gargoyleish frown of pure hatred was enough to send chills downs b-dogs spine he could hear the hooves clinking on the ground in front of him one step at a time. Charles magically had his ax back somehow some

way. Bdog began blasting at Charles. Every bullet in his gun went into one man until he reached his last bullet. Suddenly a car pulled in with headlights, thinking it was police he raised his hands up but he soon noticed it was the black kia they were supposed to meet. A short bald head guy and his down girlfriend looked at Charles in utter confusion. The girl assuming, he had to be a problem pulled out a gun and started blasting at Charles.

Each bullet did nothing to Charles walked up and started hacking at the gas tank of

the car trying to force and explosion. Panicked they hit reverse and took off. Now bdog had no help. He began to pick up bricks around the lake. Charles simply raised his hands. And a circle of fire formed around his body.

The heat was intense.

“now you see what happened to your dumb ass friend, accept your fate fool, or be burned alive.”

“ok alright, wow what the hell” bog said

“Charles clapped and magically, and B-dogs hands were bound and Traymone’s were too.

“now walk to my damn car b**** boys ”

They both walked and quietly got in. The doors locked by themselves.

“where are we going bdog said, you aint god, nigga you won’t get away with this sh--fool”

“your right I’m not god, I’m something far worse, I am all of your nightmares borrowing a human body.”

“as far your question, you are going to join the dead, you are going to join my brothers, you will enter the soul game.”

“Man I don’t care about this riddle s***, he said before crying”

Charles road off into the darkness, and the care disappeared into thin air.

Asleep in a Tree?

After a while they were sound asleep, Jason was awakened by the noise of branches breaking. He began to adjust himself in his hammock and looked down. To his fright, it was one of those black evil dogs! It was circling the tree looking up at them with its red piercing eyes. It barked viciously and began trying to scale the side of the oak tree. It made several attempts and rolled backwards with more aggression each time. It even tried jumping several times, but none of the attempts worked. The the three rappers looked on speechless. On a random impulse they

began to hurl can goods down at the dog. Some missed but some struck the dog directly. The dog grew frustrated, after waiting for an hour snarling and barking, and then he ran off into the woods. Relief pulsated through their terrified bodies. They returned to sleep for about two hours and tried to forget the encounter. Hours later they awoke and began to talk to each other. They felt much better now that they were rested. They began to open cans of beans and jerky that they had found and started to feast on them. They were really hungry from all the strenuous activities the night before. They had become lazy sleeping high above in the comfortable hammocks. They had become so comfortable in fact, that hesitation to leave the giant oak tree lasted four days. By the fourth day the food supply was getting low so

they slowly started to accept that they would have to eventually have to muster up enough courage to start traveling again. That night they began to fall asleep again.

What on earth was that?

Despite their dire circumstances, Jason and Rockelle often found themselves arguing over small things, like how they had ended up in the forest in the first place. Terrell honestly believed that if they didn't use the app in the first place this would have never happened. "Man this is all your fault, you

always think you know everything man, that's why I can't stand you sometimes" "what, I'm the problem?" "yeah you recommended the damn ride buddy app Terrell don't play dumb now genius, if it wasn't for your playing Brainiac we could have avoided this whole thing, hell we should be lucky Charles psychotic ass didn't chip us up fool" "man screw you at least I had an idea, you have always been my sidekick you never think for yourself." "that's enough Rockelle yelled." "the last thing we need is a dang argument" she said in a swanky accent, In a matter of minutes things cooled down , as Jason was climbing down from the large old oak tree to use the bathroom, while walking quietly towards the nearest bush, he heard a chilling sound coming from the direction of the river an area they had passed on the way to the tree. It sounded like a woman screaming in terror. Shocked and alarmed, Jason called out to Rockelle and Terrell and they both made their way towards the river, armed with rocks and a flashlight pen for protection. When they arrived at the

riverbank, they saw nothing but a few logs floating lazily on the water as dark tides cascaded down the riverbanks carrying branches and debris. But as they shone the light on one of the logs, it revealed a sight that made their blood run cold an image not of this world. There, crouched on the log, was a shadowy figure that looked black ghoul or shadow crouched malevolently on a log. It hissed and scratched at them, its eyes glowing with malice. It was clear and a blurr at the same time they had to squint several times to make since of the visual. “what on earth is that thing?” “not more of this weird shit” Rochelle said before backing up in fear. “man, and I thought I had seen everything.” Terrell said. Terrified, Jason and Rockelle backed away slowly, unsure of what to do slowly lowering the flashlight . “wow I don’t want no more of this shit” Jason whispered. “yeah this is some

strange stuff” Terrell replied. The figure seemed unable to leave the log though obviously it wanted to , as if it was bound to it in some way because it could not swim. They could feel its malevolent gaze following them as they ran back to the safety of the giant tree kicking rocks and breaking branches on the way back to the safe spot.Once they were safely back in the branches of the tree, they tried to process what they had just witnessed. ‘Man I am tired of this damn place already” Jason said with discontent. Rockelle was convinced that they had encountered a demon from the depths of the forest, while Jason was more skeptical, believing that it was just a trick of the light and probably a bobcat he hoped to god it was a bob cat.But as the days passed and the figure continued to haunt their nightmares and dreams , they both began to feel a growing sense of unease. The shadowy figure seemed to be watching them, waiting for its chance to strike. The sleeping area became a cold wasteland and food had disappeared many times over. It was obvious no one was coming for them and they had no idea how long they had actually been gone. Twenty minutes after dozing off, they were awakened again, by the unmistakable sound of a human voice. The voice whispered “over here, hey you two over here.” The voice sounded like a woman. They were both instantly exited. It must have been a rescue crew sent by their relatives they thought. Both guys tilted their heads down to see a young woman about the same age standing there. Awakening from a sleep all was a blur and took a few moments to bring into focus what in the hell they were staring at. She was alone contrary to what they expected and there was no rescue crew.

The mysterious lady looked to be about their age twenty three or twenty four . She had a very peculiar appearance, she

was wearing costume like clothes, she wore a black skirt and blue gene tank top , her hair was bobbed cut and red from dye, she was tall beautiful brown skin girl with a noticeably shape and athletic appearance . She was tall healthy looking and had an abnormally physical, looking appearance. She was curiously standing next to what looked like, a large spear like, she was thick stylish and looked serious, her weapon planted firmly into the ground. They were elated to see a normal healthy person but she was intimidating looking, so they had to investigate with caution, extreme caution they had already encountered at least four things they could not explain. “Come with me , if you seriously want to live. Those can goods aren’t going to last forever, and I don’t think your ready for this place” she chuckled to herself. “I have been following you through the woods for a while. I had to examine you first before I decided to make contact.”

“You mean to tell me you’re not the rescue crew” said Jason. “Rescue crew, what’s that?” said the young woman. She was genuinely perplexed by what he was saying. “Anyway, we don’t have much time, I can take you to a safer place, and these woods are anything but safe .” The three deliberated amongst themselves for a few seconds. They decided to follow her, after all what could they stand to lose. After following a well trotted trail deep into the woods four half an hour , they finally came to a weird grassy hump in the ground. She pointed down towards a square iron door flattened in the earth. She inserted a key and pull the heavy iron door with ease.

Light emanated from the door in a mysterious way. There was also a fiery warmth that blew towards them instantly covering

their body’s immediately on contact. They were scared but desperate, so they decided to travel down into the weird subterranean structure. Step by sept they

walked down the warn down stairs descending in a spiral into a central room, large and solid, it looked to be a storm shelter that had been turned into a living arrangement. “Who are you? said Jason. “I’m Latrice Hallowell,” the one who just saved your life my brother .” And if you want to stay alive, you may want to stay with me. There are thousands of those things that you saw some much bigger and stronger than the one you killed. It was a female, I saw the entire fight.”

The fear of the crazy stuff in the woods had overridden the fear of Latrice, so the guys decided to follow her and stay inside the shelter . They followed her into the underground door down the solid stone stairs. The entire enclosure was solid and well

built. The guys finally made it down the stairs to a large octagon shaped room made of wood and stone and metal. At the bottom of the stairs was another girl! About the same age as Latrice, she was slightly shorter and more friendly looking in appearance.

The two guys and Rockelle were in too much shock to really say anything, what on earth was happening, this was suppose to be a ride home and nothing more. Then finally Jason broke the silence when he saw a large crib in the corner of the room, who’s baby is that? “mine Latrice responded his name is Monty.” Jason went over to play with the young tike in his crib before turning back to the two girls who brought them there. ‘real question is who has a cat in this place” the other girl answered “that’s my cat and his named is Nintendo he may be small but he is smart he can tell you when the dogs are coming he has great hearing”, the

small tabby cat purred in the back ground as if he was thrilled he was being noticed. There was a coal heater and weapons lining every part of the wall including a large shiny shotgun. Baskets of stuff and blankets filled the corners of the room. Jason didn’t seem to care anymore he saw two good looking girl’s food blankets and heat, they had already won him over. Terrell was still skeptical. It all looked safe, as safe as it could get considering and possibly the best answer Jason thought, “but what would happen if they got in here with us” he asked Latrice boldly.” She slowly walked to a corner of the prison like room, and removed a red velvet curtain exposing a hole

in the wall. Its an evacuation tunnel she said, I know it doesn't look like much but it leads to four other safety post. It's how we survive out here, they are unpredictable dangerous and always hungry. This is real survival shit, this not a movie baby. Rockelle looked around the room holding her arms and pouting the entire time she didn't want to introduce herself and she definitely didn't like latrice at all she had no mercy for other pretty girls. She didn't like the smell or décor in the storm shelter either she just didn't want to be in this place period.

Rockelle vs Latrice

They had been in the shelter for a while. They strange woman in the woods had invited them in to her abode. They were simply happy to be away from the outside area, it was worst than the most dangerous of neighborhoods, no stranger to gun violence and police brutality, this place made the worst areas of the city

seem safe. They all stared at each other for a while. They couldn't take their eyes off the two strange girls they had just met and why they had a baby in a damn survival shelter. The girls just stared at them as if they had never seen people before, or that they hadn't seen people often, either way they were both odd all the way down to the serious faces and athletic appearance. The girls often offered Rockelle food and water and were constantly met with an attitude, a bizarre stank attitude that they could not comprehend. The tension was inevitable, Latrice had never been one to shy away from a challenge and this new girl, this new thing Rockelle was uncontrollably offensive and felt no need to hold back words or emotions when she was upset. Latrice the stranger, was immediately drawn to the handsome man standing beside the jealous girl who was beautiful but filled with bad manners. From the moment she laid eyes on him, she knew there was something special about Terrell, tall athletic humorous yet honest looking. Somebody had to break the

communication barrier so , the strange woman offered to just that. As they stood in the stone room glancing at each other in ignorance , Latrice extended her hand in a welcoming gesture to the new chick , hoping to make a good first impression. But Rockelle, sensing the attraction between Terrell and Latrice, refused to shake her hand blatantly she just didn’t give a shit about acting nice towards the stunning dark girl that they had just met. "I'm not in the mood," she snapped and rolled her eyes, her eyes narrowing with jealousy. Undeterred, Latrice smirked and replied, "Maybe I can make you in the mood." “how so explain” Rockelle replied condescendingly. Before Rockelle could react, she suddenly found her wrist caught in Latrice's vice-like grip. The room fell silent as Terrell intervened, signaling for the two women to stop.Rockelle pulled her hand away, shooting Latrice a

venomous glare. "You have no idea who you're messing with miss thing!," she hissed, her voice filled with malice and pure hatred.

She was a bad girl friend and she knew eventually her time would be up but she wouldn’t go down without a fight she was the skinnier of the two but she didn’t intimidate easy, but at least she thought she didn’t .Despite the tension in the room, Terrell remained calm. "Let's all just take a deep breath and try to figure out where we are," he suggested, his voice soothing and commanding at the same time. As they looked around the stone room, they realized there were no windows or doors, only four walls surrounding them like a prison. The air felt heavy and oppressive and dense , making it hard to think clearly."We need to find a way out of here," Terrell said, breaking the eerie silence that had settled over them. Latrice nodded in agreement, her mind racing with thoughts of escape.As the hours passed, tension between the three of them continued to simmer.

Rockelle's jealousy only seemed to grow stronger, while Latrice found herself drawn to Terrell more and more with each passing moment. But just as things seemed to reach a breaking point, a strange noise suddenly filled the room, echoing off the walls in a haunting melody. It was a sound unlike anything they had ever heard before, sending shivers down their spines. "What is that?" Rockelle whispered, her eyes wide with fear. Before anyone could answer, the ground beneath them began to shake, causing the walls of the room to tremble and crack. Terrified, they clung to each other, unsure of what was happening or how to escape.

And then, as suddenly as it had begun, the shaking stopped. The room fell silent once again, leaving them standing in stunned silence. It was almost as if it were a warning that that they were being watched by someone or something. As they stood in awe of their new surroundings, Terrell turned to Latrice with a glint in

his eyes. "I think we're going to need to stick together if we're going to survive this," he said, his voice filled with determination.

Rockelle’s Song

Rockelle sat center in the dimly lit stone safety room with Jason, Latrice, and Terrell. The baby was fast asleep in its crib, oblivious to the eerie atmosphere of the hideout. The only sound that broke the silence was the incessant meowing of the hungry cat named Nintendo. Rockelle's friend, Wendy, sat beside her, meticulously painting her nails a bright red as she chatted away without pause.Latrice, who had always harbored a deep dislike for Rockelle, sat in brooding silence, her eyes filled with resentment. She couldn't stand the way Rockelle always demanded attention and admiration from everyone around her quietly but not intentionally. Latrice felt like she never got the recognition she deserved, and Rockelle's narcissistic behavior only fueled her animosity. Rockelle, completely unaware of Latrice's feelings or anybody elses feelings for that matter, suddenly decided to share a song with her friends.

With a self-satisfied smile, she launched into a painfully off-key rendition of Beyonce's "Halo," her voice screeching and cracking as she tried

to hit the high notes. The others exchanged glances of discomfort, their ears ringing from the cacophony of sound filling the room.

Ten agonizing minutes later, Rockelle finally finished her performance, her eyes shining with anticipation as she looked around the room for applause. To her dismay, only Terrell, her loyal boyfriend, clapped half-heartedly, trying to appease her bruised ego. “that was great babe” Rockelle, oblivious to the lack of enthusiasm from her friends, beamed in delight and thanked them profusely, taking a sip of her tea as if she had just delivered a flawless concert. “oh my god ,I knew you all would like it” she said clapping gracefully. I was just trying to liven it up a little bit.” He often searched through her bags changing her wigs from, blond curls, black curls and a ponytail. She was unstable, and many wondered why Terrell, a guy that everyone mostly liked, wanted her in the first place. The extreme makeup the nasally voice and condescending speech was too much for most people.As the group sat in awkward silence, the atmosphere in the room grew increasingly tense. Outside, the night was filled with sinister sounds – the howling of demon dogs, the whispers of shadow demons, and the fluttering of dark wings belonging to unseen creatures. Branches often scraped against the door making and eerie scratching noise. Rockelle and her friends were oblivious to the dangers lurking beyond their hideout, consumed by their own petty dramas.

Rockelle’s Split

Rockelle sat in the stone room like a giant baby, she whined and moaned and never stopped stalking. She took as many pictures as she could. “this place is so ghetto.” How in the word did you all stay here, I would have been moved out. feeling the oppressive heat seeping into her bones. She glanced over at Latrice, who was staring blankly at the wall, a bored expression on her face. Rockelle had never liked Latrice, especially after she had squeezed her wrist so hard it left bruises the last time they had a disagreement. Wendy, Jason, and Terrell tried to convince Rockelle to stay inside the stone room, warning her of the demonic hounds that roamed the woods outside. But Rockelle couldn't stand the suffocating atmosphere of the room any longer. She needed to escape, even if it meant facing the dangers lurking in the darkness outside. Without a second thought, Rockelle crawled out of the tomb shelter and ran through the woods, the sound of her footsteps amplified by the silence of the night. Moments later, Wendy and Jason followed after her, their hearts pounding in their chests. They found Rockelle standing in a clearing, her eyes fixed on an odd light flickering in the distance. Before they could react, a large shadow entity rushed through the area at an alarmingly high speed, grabbing Rockelle by her hair and dragging her through the tree line into the darkness beyond. “no0000!” he screamed. “do something wendy screamed, do what?” Wendy and Jason could only stand in shock, their screams echoing through the still night air. They knew they had to go back and inform Terrell of what had happened, but the thought of telling him that his girlfriend had been taken by some unknown entity filled them with dread. As they returned to the

stone room hideout, the atmosphere had shifted. The air felt heavier, the shadows darker. Terrell looked up at them expectantly, his eyes filled with a mix of hope and fear.Wendy took a deep breath and began to recount the events that had unfolded in the woods, her voice trembling with each word.

Jason added in details, his eyes wide with fear as he described the shadow entity that had taken Rockelle away. Terrell's face paled as he listened, his hands shaking with fear. He couldn't believe what he was hearing, couldn't fathom the thought of losing Rockelle to something so sinister and unknown. The group sat in silence, the weight of the situation settling over them like a heavy cloak. They knew they had to do something, had to find Rockelle and bring her back before it was too late.As they prepared to venture back out into the woods, a sense of dread settled in the pit of

their stomachs. The darkness outside seemed to press in on them, suffocating and unrelenting.They armed themselves with whatever makeshift weapons they could find, their hands trembling as they gripped them tightly. The woods whispered with an otherworldly presence, the branches creaking and moaning in the wind.As they ventured deeper into the darkness, they could feel eyes watching them from the shadows. The demonic hounds prowled around them, their eyes glowing with a malevolent light.But they pressed on, determined to find Rockelle and bring her back to safety. They followed the trail of the shadow entity, their hearts pounding in their chests as they drew closer to its lair.Finally, they reached a clearing bathed in an eerie glow. In the center stood the shadow entity, its form shifting and changing with each passing moment. And at its feet lay Rockelle, unconscious and pale, her hair tangled and matted with blood.Without hesitation, Terrell charged forward, his screams filling the night air as he confronted the shadow entity.

Wendy and Jason followed close behind, their weapons raised in a futile attempt to protect their friend.But the shadow entity was too powerful, too otherworldly. It lashed out with a ferocity that sent them flying, their bodies battered and broken against the unforgiving ground.As they lay there, gasping for breath and staring into the darkness, they knew that Rockelle was lost to them forever. The shadow thing had taken her, consumed her soul in a way that could never be undone.

Demon at the park (back in the city)

Andre and his friends had just finished playing a quick game of basketball at Oakland City Park sweaty tired and playful they sat their young bodies down on the curb and took a rest . The clock had struck eleven, and they decided to sit on the

side of the

road and enjoy the cool night air, while sipping on cold Gatorade. The park was eerily quiet ghetto and crowded in the day it was peaceful at night, full of graffiti trash and suspicious people it was nowhere for small teenagers to hang out at, yet they did.

With only the sounds of the crickets chirping in the background and the faint glow of yellow street lamps they simply enjoyed the night ambiance .As they sat there, they noticed a car slowly driving past the basketball court . It crept slowly and inched forward at an extremely slow pace it rolled without much force up the street and right in front of them, the window was down and it was dark inside, so dark that only a shadow of a man could

be seen. The headlights illuminated a strange man behind the wheel with a large collar and black hood drooping forward, his eyes fixed on them. PJ, one of Andre's friends, immediately felt a sense of unease and decided to throw his ice-cold Gatorade at the man kind of a warning to leave them alone, his mom warned never to talk to strangers especially in that park, they were past curfew and that was a problem in an of itself. The others tried to stop him, knowing it was a bad idea, ‘p man stop you always doing bad stuff man, somebody goanna get you one day.” but PJ was stubborn and didn't care he was bully and a bad kid who never had a father and he let everyone know it every chance he got.As PJ raised his hand to throw the bottle, the man in the car raised his hand as well waiving it eerily in a pointed circle. A chilling gust of wind blew through the park, causing PJ to drop the Gatorade, claiming his hand was burning hot. ‘what the hell” he screamed holding his hand in agony. “what’s wrong?” the others asked. “it’s my hand bro, my damn hand.” The others looked at each other in fear as they realized who the man in the car was – ‘the Cadillac Man,’ a demon that their parents had warned them about. The friends quickly gathered their things and ran off, their hearts pounding with fear their small sneakers squeaking up the paved street out of the park and back to their apartment complex. They knew they should have listened to their parents' warnings about the Cadillac Man, but now it was too late. They could feel his presence lingering in the park, a dark energy that sent shivers down their spines.Andre and his friends made their way home, trying to shake off the feeling of dread that had settled over them.

But as they walked through the quiet streets, they couldn't help but feel like they were being watched followed or even cursed by the Cadillac man. Shadows seemed to dance at the corners of their vision, and the wind whispered

eerie secrets in their ears. It was the last time that pj decided to bully a random person.

Terrell’s Date with Latrice

Latrice and Terrell had been trapped in the dark room for what felt like an eternity. The darkness enveloped them, but at least they were there with cute guys, at least that’s how Latrice saw it. The darkness of the failing fire making it difficult to see each other's faces clearly. At first, they were both scared and unsure of each other Latrice was intimidatingly beautiful like Serena Williams and a video girl combined she was hard to talk to , but as the days turned into weeks, they began to bond over their shared experiences and fears. She was becoming addictive to Terrell, and so was Wendy to Jason. Latrice Hallowell had been there for years and so did Wendy Dupree, they were numb to emotional roller coaster. Despite their initial fear, and crazy antics, and mistrust, Latrice found herself drawn to Terrell, she often cracked jokes about his hair and offered to feed him. His calming presence and unwavering strength gave her a sense of security in the otherwise terrifying darkness. She found herself opening up to him in ways she never had with anyone before.One day, as they sat in the corner of the room, Terrell suggested that they go on a mini date outside of the safety shelter. Wendy, Jason, and baby Monty stayed behind, watching with both concern and curiosity as the two ventured out into the dark woods. Latrice led Terrell to a small clearing not far from

the safety shelter. The moonlight filtered through the trees, casting a silvery glow over the two of them as they sat on a fallen log. Latrice took a deep breath, gathering her courage before she began to speak. “So tell me about Freddy, Monty’s dad” ‘well it was a quick fling that shouldn’t have lasted as long as it did, we were up and down and he was very verbally abusive as a boyfriend, there were times where I felt like being eaten by the wolves was better than being with him, and that’s one of the reasons I ended up being out here.” “wow that’s messed up” he said laughing lightly. The selection of men here are worst than the demons that lurk in the woods, she said before laughing, she smiled and that was something Terrell didn’t see often. “but why risk staying out here and possibly dying,” “well it was once told to me when I first got here, that there were two ways out, you could kill the gatekeeper and be set free, or if you died in battle trying to save others your soul would set free, so I guess unconsciously I figured one day they would get me out here and so I figured that was my way out, I’m not rushing it , but if it happens it happens.” “well I’m here now and we are going to make it out of here, I promise” Terrell said.” “I hope so she said with a faint tear in her eye” and then he gave her a hug. How could someone so strong fear they could not beat the gatekeeper. Then it dawned on him I guess years of being here fear got to her, and after all she was still a woman forced to do a mans job.

She told Terrell about the baby's father, Freddy, and how he lived in the stone city. She spoke of the abuse and neglect she had suffered at his hands before she finally found the strength to escape and move to the safety post with Wendy years ago. Terrell listened intently, his gaze filled with understanding and compassion. As the night wore on, they laughed and talked, their conversations ranging from childhood memories to hopes and

dreams for the future. The tension that had once filled the air between them dissipated, replaced by a newfound sense of closeness and connection.When the date was over, Terrell leaned in and kissed Latrice softly on the lips. The moment felt both thrilling and terrifying, a mix of desire and fear that sent a shiver down Latrice's spine. As they made their way back to the stone room, their footsteps echoing in the

darkness, Latrice felt a surge of emotion unlike anything she had ever experienced before. Back in the safety of the stone room, Latrice and Terrell looked at each other with newfound affection and understanding. The darkness that had once seemed suffocating now felt like a cocoon, wrapping them in a sense of security and comfort.As they settled in for the night, Latrice felt a sense of peace wash over her. She knew that whatever the future held, she had found a kindred spirit in Terrell, someone who understood her in a way no one else ever had.And as they drifted off to sleep, their hands intertwined in the darkness, Latrice couldn't help but feel a glimmer of hope in the depths of despair. For in the darkest of places, she had found a light in Terrell's eyes, a beacon of love and understanding that she knew would guide them through whatever trials lay ahead.

The girl introduced her friend. “Like I said I am Latrice and this is my friend Wendy I have been here for four years she has been here for seven years.” Wendy was short with long flowing hair, she had a rounded pretty face with long eyelashes she wore her hair similar to Latrice with a red bob cut. “Hold on!” Terrell said. “Been where for four years? Is that what you just said?” “I don’t want to break your heart stranger but you are far from home,

how can I break this to you in a delicate way. You’re in another place.” “Be specific” he said “what? Another state, another city?”

Nightmare of Voo-dalla

“No” she said. I didn’t want to tell you so early but you are somewhere between earth and another place in time, where here and not here at the same time if that is not too confusing. We are where the hateful things are, devil thought projections of human thought become real things here, real creatures” the room just went totally silent in awe and confusion, it sounded right and wrong at the same time . “It’s like purgatory, if you ever heard of that word.” “Like another dimension” Jason said. “Yes something like that” said Latrice, there are many people here, thousands, living close to the dark river. They live in small protected compound villages to stave off the hounds, and the other demonic entities that occupy these woods.

“So you’re trying to tell me he drove us into another dimension like hell. This is impossible!” said Terrell. He was driving an old ass Cadillac.” “That was not a Cadillac, and that was not a man” Latrice said. “He was a demon and that was interdimensional chariot. The car can change form at will and so can he. He is a special type of demon? He is also the one who brought us here. An old guy from the people’s village told me that he must capture

666 souls to free himself from this dark place, so he can live again amongst humans undetected.” There are many stories about how this terrible place came to exist but it’s not really hell because you can escape supposedly some people have but I never saw it, a guy passing through once told me that it was all caused by one man.

Martin k. Bowers curse, as told by “Latrice”

Hundreds of years ago in this very city, there live a man named Martin K. bower. He worked on a railroad supporting his family of eight children, a law abiding negro he was a friend to many but still an enemy to some. They lived deep in the woods and worked for the P**each co. railway company**, for years. From, the islands, he was a deep believer of voodoo and dark magic His family was born in Haiti and taken here as slaves. To make a long story short, there was a serial killer on the loose one summer a long time ago, a very important woman a white woman was killed “karen white” in a long series of murders I think she was the daughter of the police chief. The police never caught the killer. Out of frustration, they framed the only successful black guy in town, Mr. Martin K. Bower, before being sentenced to death by hanging, it was said that, it was Martin K. Bower that summoned Charles from the voodoo dimension, Charles was supposed to be the grim reaper to those who had

gone against the laws of Voodalla and agent of death for evil whites, that the punishment should fit the crime was one of his goals , he was sent to spiritually torture and entire city permanently. Charles himself came from the thirteenth level of hell, the mass murder dimension , which I mentioned before, he is trying to escape, but he was originally summoned to do the bidding of Martin k. Bower. Unchallenged and uncaught he has lasted centuries given souls are not easy to take.

The demons who live here come from the unconscious minds of people. They live vicarious through our evil thoughts and desires. ‘Voodalla’ is a place that has been cursed in a way that it exist outside of space and time and all nightmares can exist all at once. This place is were souls are tortured at the desires of other humans. Jealousy and wickedness is the chief of wisdom here.

Well that’s at least one explanation that I heard.” “supreme chief demons like Charles, are trying to escape hell literally by collecting souls to replace themselves in the fiery pit, so they allow evil voodoo priest to summon them for small task so that they may run free, and walk the earth. Make no mistake about it, Charles is one of the most violent demons there are. He is not to be taken as a joke.” She reached down to pick up cup of water before clearing her throat. The fire from the furnace

illuminated her eyes as she spoke adding more dimensions to the strange things she said. “sad but true, if people were not evil, this place would not exist”

“This is crazy! But it would explain how we keep walking and never seen any houses cars and gas stations, and it also explain the evil hell dogs. But isn’t purgatory or Voodalla for bad people, he has to have some type of moral reason to grab us right?”

Terrell said. “No, said Wendy he needs the souls of the innocent, 666 innocent to be exact, to be freed.” “We didn’t do anything we were the innocent” Wendy interjected in an emotional outburst and she began to cry. Latrice grabbed her to console her. “So how do we get out?” asked Terrell? “It’s complicated” she said. “Some have escaped not many” “How! Tell me!” he asked desperately. “It’s not that simple she said, you can’t simply run to the edge of the forest, some have tried they always find themselves exactly back where they started. It’s like some type of evil magical loop, also the sun never comes up in this dimension, its eternally night, but the moon does change however. There are silver moons, purple moons and blood moons. When the moon is purple the hounds hibernate it’s the best time to travel to the village. When it’s red they are most aggressive and carnivorous. Once on a red moon they killed one hundred people in a night.

“What happens to people when they are killed by the voodoo hounds aren’t we already in hell? “Correction, we are in purgatory-or voodalla as they call it ” Latrice said. “When the hounds kill you, your soul will then travel to hell, so fighting for your life is still necessary here.” “The only way to escape is to retrieve a key from the belly of the beast, the Alfa hounds have the gateway key inside of their stomachs. The only way out of here is to slay an alpha dog and remove the key from its bowls.”

“When the key is removed who so ever holds it in their hands will be teleported back to their original location along with three others of their choosing I never witnessed it personally but the older people here say it has happened before. The alpha dogs are not easy to kill though, they are more aggressive than the other demon dogs. They

can be spotted by a white stripe on their

backs.” We have survived many attacks and killed some but they were always the regular kind, I’m Just trying to keep it real we are living in a giant dog kennel she said before laughing. They all laughed to relieve some tension.

Jason and Terrell looked at each other in disbelief, they were so overwhelmed by what they were hearing. It was hard enough to kill the first dog now they were being told they had to officially become some demon dog slayer to actually escape. Wendy offered the guys some blankets and bread for the night they all retired in separate bunk beds spread along the walls of the room.

Terrell could not sleep he seemed to lay there staring hopelessly at the ceiling. Thoughts raced through is head endlessly. It’s like he was stuck in a bad videogame or worst a bad dream. He didn’t want to take what the girls were saying seriously but he had been attacked by an unknown species of dog before he even met them, so there had to be some shred of truth to what they were saying. There was no electricity only lanterns. All hope of calling home was completely gone. He couldn’t find any sort of solution to the problem at hand. He found himself forced to accept the fairytale story that Latrice and Wendy had just told them. They were nice girls but the impossibility of escape without killing the wolf like creatures just seemed Ludacris. He began to recite prayers from Sunday school they rehearsed when he was a kid. He felt as if god was punishing him for some deed that he did or was about to do. He remembered what Latrice said about the village of people on the other side of the dark river. Maybe they knew another way to escape this hellish dimension. The first option just seemed way too risky.

“so tell me a little something, something about yourself” “I know this is a lotta shit at one time” she said before laughing. Jason soon wondered if she was on crack cocaine, and that they were high and making everything up. It had to be drugs, he thought silently to himself, I mean, Charles did look weird as hell and the dog was

even stranger, and they note even made shit more real.

But how could he know if they were telling the truth, people lie all the time, maybe the two girls were broke and trying to rob them. “well I don’t know” something positive, his mind drew a blank , then he said, oh, yea me and Terrell over here are rappers, my name is lil ***Guapo*** and his name is A.k ***Bhugatti.*** We have a viral song on Instagram, he *said with a*

proud face. Next year we are going to be big, that’s if

we get the hell out of this shit. “Oh really’ let me hear you rap, “now?” “yeah now” she said before laughing. Ok let me think...

Rules of voodalla-extended games of the dead

In the dark depths of the underworld, there existed a sinister game known as Voodalla Latrice explained slowly and carefully . It was a game of souls, a twisted competition where the stakes were high and the rules were bizarre. Those who played knew that death was not the end, but a one-way ticket to eternal damnation. Latrice, a veteran of the game, took it upon herself to explain the rules to the newcomers, Jason and Terrell, rookie

guys. She spoke in a hushed tone, her eyes wide with fear as she recounted the horrors that awaited those who failed to play by the rules."You see," she began,

"Voodalla is not like any other place you ever been to it’s a game a place and a state of mind. Or the most evil game you've ever played if you want to look at it that way my boys. It's a game of life and death, where the consequences are very real. If you fight the right way, you can return to the land of the living and escape the clutches of hell.

But if you die in battle, your soul will be condemned to eternal torment."Jason and Terrell listened intently, their hearts pounding in their chests as they tried to make sense of the strange rules of the game. They had been thrust into this nightmare world without warning, and now they had no choice but to play along if they wanted to survive. she explained clearly, that after clearing her throat the rules of the game, they ventured further into the dark abyss, they saw that the landscape was shrouded in darkness for most of the year, illuminated only by the pale glow of the moon. The air was cold and heavy, filled with the scent of decay and despair. But in the last two months of the year, a strange phenomenon occurred – sunlight pierced through the thick clouds, bathing the underworld in a warm, golden light.During this time, the rules of Voodalla changed explained Latrice . The demons and beasts that roamed the darkened realm vanished, leaving the players to fend for themselves in the harsh light of day. It was during these precious months, that the trapped souls did most of their learning, honing their skills and strategies in preparation for the battles to come with true evil .Jason and Terrell quickly realized that survival in Voodalla required more than just physical strength, they didn’t want to believe any of this but they didn’t really have a choice– it also demanded cunning and resourcefulness and

gangster behavior . They had to rely on their wits and instincts to outmaneuver their opponents and secure their place in the game, like the two fine woman in front of them.

The Rap

Jason cleared his throat and spit a verse, “Latrice you got the body of a saint, you got my smiling like, I just received a million dollar check in gold paint, dudes try to check me but they can’t, girls try to kiss me but they faint, I’m the greatest rapper alive ask my brother Carlos the saint. “Nice, I like it” “you know I used to dance, I was in the music world too that is, before I was snatched, I’m not new to the night life.” She said before looking sad, the mood quickly dropped as if, it would never ever be the same again . It was all just to lighten the mood, but the effort soon failed. The torn feeling of despair quickly returned torturing her very body .

The next day all four people awoke to a breakfast of bread fish and tea and a lot of other stuff Jason and Terrell couldn’t even define honestly, some of the grub didn’t not look like food at all . Latrice set up a small table like structure in the middle of the room. Both guys seemed a little more adjusted to the

scenario after having a warm good night’s sleep. “everybody bow your head” latrice said before reciting a prayer before eating.

Everyone began to eat silently, exhausted chomping on the food as if it were going to disappear soon.

Jason cleared his throat to speak, “um” “so Latrice tell us you’re story how did he get you?” Latrice sighed sadly, and began to speak with a sudden drop in overall confidence . “Well it was four years ago, I was 15 at the time, I was a party of a friend. There were a lot of people present. Some of the party guest were entertainers and other very important people. Photographers and talent managers and a lot of other evil people. I wasn’t supposed to be there I snuck out of the house against my mother’s will and til this day honey, boy do I regret it. I wanted to be there because I

was looking for my big break, you know I was cute and talented , and still am, she said chuckling lightly. “I wanted to be a teen model like the , video girls. Anyway, I was sitting on the back porch at the party that a shady friend should I say , brought me too, and this old weird sounding man walks outside, he was dressed in an old school brown suit and had this large hat covering his eyes in the evilest of ways . A guy at the party introduced him as a famous photographer, Mr. C-note, who had worked with many big names in the industry so I definitely was eager to introduce myself. ‘how are I’m Angel love, I remember calling my self, a stupid name now that I think of it she said before laughing lightly, and biting some food reluctantly. He told me all these people he had worked with, some of the models I had heard of, and he had the pictures to prove it.

So he stayed outside all night telling me how beautiful I was

and how he could help my career. Later that night, the party started to clear out. I started to feel my self-getting sleepy but I didn’t drink any wine or anything. My vision began to get blurry and all I could see was him in the corner smiling. And hour later, I woke up in the backseat of a Cadillac hands bound. I screamed as loud as I could and cried but no one came. The windows were dark all I could see was trees and street lights. After riding about an hour, he stepped out of the car and opened up the back door. He snatched me out of the car and hurled me to the ground, that’s when the nightmare became real, realer than anything I could describe. He untied by hands and mouth and told me “watch out for the dogs.” I begged him to take me home but he just didn’t care. I cried and cried I promised him money but nothing worked. He got in the old Cadillac and sped off laughing all the way up the street. I walked for an hour crying thinking my mother was going to kill me. After walking a mile, I met Wendy sitting on top of a rock. She gave me a home here and I have been here ever since.”

“That sounds terrible!” said Jason. Wow, I can’t believe what I’m hearing, we have to stop this evil man, what about you Wendy?, how did he get you?” “He got me when I was thirteen” she said. It was late one day after school and I was getting off from band practice there was an after school shuttle bus that took everyone home

every day after practice. That particular day, my stomach was hurting so I stayed in the bathroom way longer than normal. When I came out the bathroom I had missed the shuttle bus. The parking lot was almost clear. The sun started to go down and I became scared. Suddenly a cab began to roll slowly into the parking lot, He rolled right in front of the steps where I was sitting and asked me if I needed any help. He was

wearing the same brown church like suit with the large hat. I told him didn't have any money and that my mom was at work. He agreed to help me out anyway. He told me I reminded him of his granddaughter. He was old so I trusted him. So I got in the cab it smelled really good like cinnamon and peppermint. He began to drive me home while I pointed the way. I was comfortable at first, he kind of reminded me of my grandpa. Half way through the ride, he began to accelerate in the wrong direction. I screamed you are going the wrong way! He didn't care he started laughing and turned up the music up. Before I knew it, we were on this dark freeway I never seen before. He came to a sudden stop and kicked me out. Half way up the street he yelled "watch out for the dogs" I walked for three hours before I met Mrs. Mary the original owner of this underground bunker. She was like a mother to me," she said in tears. She was here for 32 years. One day Mary went out and she forgot that it was blood moon season because she was getting old. Her mind began to fade. She was killed by a pack of hell hounds. I went out to search for her but all I founded was a tattered dress stained in blood. I was left alone but I survived with everything that Mary had taught me."

"This is a nightmare" said Terrell and "that demon thing old man must be stopped!"

"hold on, I don't want to sound crazy but, do you think Brandon could have something to do with this, I mean he could be one of them too, think about it, there was nothing wrong with his car, he was speeding all over the city, joking, chatting it up with females at McDonalds and everything." "Could be, you got a real solid point with that one." Terrell replied. He's not the only one, Latrice said. there are many purgatory demons in these woods

many have gained freedom from escaping hell first and then escaping purgatory by imprisoning the innocent souls of the youth and the old. Once they gain 666 souls each, they can walk the earth full power and live amongst humans undetected. These creatures are evil and they were originally prisoners of the

13th level of hell a place reserved for the wicked of spirits. They are violent and have powers in case you are thinking about trying to confront one of them. I can tell you from personal Experience it will not be easy. The talking was getting them all tired. They took a break and Wendy prepared everyone some food. Latrice sat in the corner holding a mirror to her face. She begin to apply some makeup, she wanted to look presentably to her new guest. After just moments of holding the mirror, she dropped it shattering it on the floor. Her eyes filled with tears as she screamed “I’m tired of being here, I don’t deserve this.” They were startled by her sudden breakdown. She had just seemed some composed and confident. “Terrell walked over to her and gave her a hug.”

They stayed up all night thinking, Terrell walked towards tiny bookshelf they had in the awkward fort like room. It was filled with old tattered romance novels a few bibles and a diary. Below it was maps a curling iron for hair and what looked like food utensils. It was a weird reminder and proof that they had been there and extremely long time. Hanging above it was a short steel katana sword that also reminded them how serious this situation actually was. If they died they would be puppy chow. It was literally a disturbing enough idea that Terrell was becoming possessed with fear.

Meanwhile away from the room

In the far distance near the main road, a wrecking truck pulls in carrying a car in its tow. Charles the monster, the demon in the night steps out. He tilts his hat and lights his cigar, the smoke blowing eerily in the wind as the night chill filled the air. He methodically walks towards the door and make sure it's locked.

In the small grey vehicle sits, Shayna, a mother and her 13 year old son Leron. Charles shifts the gear to lower the car releasing it to the ground. He took one last look at the two occupants and hopped back in the towing truck. Within a matter of minutes he was out of site. Shayna looks at Leron in confusion.

"I think this nut job is gone." She said before puffing on a Newport cigarette "I hope so, said Leron, that guy has lost it, mom.' "Now we just have to get out of here, I don't know how, he locked it from the outside but he did." Shayna looked around for a minute, through the floor board of her car and finally found a flashlight. " I can't believe this entire scenario," she said before staring frustrated into the dashboard mirror checking her hair.

"You hear that?" Leron said "hear what, no time for jokes leron we have to get out of here." "I hear growling." Shayna shined the light around each side of the car and didn't see anything noticeable. There was an eerie pause for a few moments followed by the sound of moving grass and sticks.

"Look in the bushes, leron whispered in a low and fearful tone." A large black harry hump, attempted to lower itself in the tall grasses, as if to pounce. "Don't make any noise, Shayna commanded." Suddenly in a burst of explosive violent force the hound rammed the side of the car, rocking it so hard, it almost flipped over. It was at this ominous moment in time the animal walked into plain site. "Shayna screamed immediately." What the hell is that?" The animal began to wag its tail as if it were suddenly calm. Then in a spontaneous fit of aggression began biting ferociously at the door handle of the car. The fact the handle was made of solid steel didn't seem to bother the animal or its tremendous teeth. Shayna immediately starting trying to start the car again. She turn the ignition several times to no avail. Finally, with the

grace of god above, she turn the ignition and the car started. Hope filled her spirit for a moment and then reality set back in. she floored the gas up the street the animals following close behind. The car soon reached seventy miles per hour and the animal could not continue on.

“I think we lost him ma, nice move said leron.”

“I’m not done yet said Shayna, animals are vengeful, if we don’t kill him he may keep follow us to kill us.”

“She turned the car around and turned on her head lights.” She began to roll slowly back in the direction of the animal. She saw him up ahead resting in the middle of the street. When the car came back into view the animal stood up, he knew it was round two. Shayna floored it reaching sixty miles per hour in a matter of minutes. The dog lunged forward foolishly and collided with

grill and windshield of the car. The sinister animal was dead on impact. When the car came to rest, Shayna and Leron looked out the rearview to see if it was still moving it wasn’t.” “I can’t believe this mom, we just killed a werewolf, and you are a beast.” “I’m not sure what that is, she replied but it sure isn’t anything I have ever seen before.” Shayna and Leron continued to drive up the hauntingly dark road in search of a convenience store, police station or anything slightly identifiable. Hours passed and gas was beginning to run low. They finally decided to park on the side of the road and wait for help, right before Charles disconnected her phone she sent a secret sos message to her mother Anne. They had no idea what to do at this point but wait in the cold and the darkness.

Strange chick

Hours had passed since they had arrived in the underground bunker. Jason decided that he needed to come up to use the bathroom. “Don’t go far, Wendy suggested they will pop up anywhere. “Note taken” Jason responded. Jason flopped open the iron door. He stepped out onto the surface and embraced the night air. He only walked about one hundred feet to find a spot. Before he could pull down his pants he spotted something from afar. Ten feet from him was beautiful girl, she was dressed in

regular attire as if she had been abducted. She was striking, beautiful brown skin that glowed, curls hanged lightly from her hair and she had a body that would bring shame to most. She must be a new entry Jason thought to himself. He didn’t hesitate to pull his pants up and go over to her.

“I’m Jason, he said smiling.” “Did Charles get you too?” The girl didn’t say anything she just kept on smiling. To his shock, she grabbed his face and just started kissing him. He enjoyed it and didn’t resist. She then started to caress his ear gently and then he felt a tug? With a vengeance the girl began pulling at his ear, it hurt tremendously, and then in a feat of demonic strength she pulled off his ear! Blood trickled down his shoulder as he screamed. He immediately punched her in the face. She fell to the ground laughing blood dripping from her mouth. Once she was down Jason ran as fast as he could back to the bunker. He rushed in bleeding.

“What in the world happened to you?” Wendy asked. “It was one of the demon things, it looked like a girl, I thought she was stranded then she attacked me.” Latrice immediately pulled out the first aid kit. Later on that night the two girls stitched up his

ear. Although it was partially removed he could hear fine. ”I told you” Wendy said cautiously, they are everywhere. “So can you take us to the people’s village” Jason asked he was now more determined than ever. “I want to know more about these dogs, you said it’s the only way to escape I just wanted to be sure?”

“Yes I can take you. Wendy and I will lead you there, but we must wait till a purple moon when they sleep, it is the safest way.

Purple moons only last a while so it’s still a risky journey. We must take weapons and food. But I will warn you after the purple moon cycle comes the red moon the most dangerous cycle. We must be armed and prepared.

Jason and Terrell looked at each other for affirmation. “It’s a deal” they both said in unison. Wendy began to clean up the plates from the breakfast. She also began to fold the blankets and put them back in their baskets. She was happy for the new guest. Laterite began to climb the stairs to get some fresh air it was a must considering they were living underground. The air could get very dense and dirty very easy so the girls made common practice of going outside to stretch. The guys decided they needed some fresh air too and followed closely behind. Wendy lifted the latch and opened the door. She screamed immediately!! “Aaaaaahhh! “Something rolled off the other side of the door. It was a severed bloody hand it looked like it had been bitten off. They peeped out scanning the perimeters no one was there. So they stepped out anyway the fresh air was critical.

Finding dead bodies was not something that was not new to Wendy and Latrice.

“Looks like someone had just been dropped off, and didn’t make it pass the hounds, they don’t always find the safety outpost you know, and many become dog food. The hand looked like a young girl. It was a devastating sight. The group of four began to stretch and take in as much air as they could

fearfully. The moon was silver the safest moon. They quickly decided to go back in. once down to the main floor Latrice began to show the guys weapons that they had made. Some were new some were old. Somewhere used by Mary before they came.

The

wall was lined with swords made from wolf bones, pick axes, knives and spears. It was truly primitive site but it's how they had survived for years. Latrice began to open a trunk in the corner and she pulled out a rolled up piece of paper. She explained to them that it was a map of the forest. It was the best way to find the peoples village. Tied to the map was an old compass rusty with the word Mary carved into the side of it.

"we have traveled to the village before, its really more like a stone homeless camp to be honest." Latrice said and did it safely, but there's a strict protocol for not being killed" if we follow this map and use the compass properly we won't ever encounter any forest demons or wolves "We should leave much later tonight when the purple moon starts and we must travel fast to avoid the blood moon. Many have died traveling during the blood moon. I must also teach you to use the weapons that we have they may not look like much but they do work and they have kept us alive for years. So I will train you, this is not about ego this is about survival. Even if you know how to fight you don't know how to fight these dogs they are smart strategic and ferocious. They are the guardians of purgatory. Their only purpose is to hold us prisoner with fear. we have had many friends like you come in one day and died the next day because they didn't listen this is not a joke.

"I hear you said Terrell, sometimes I still can't believe what has happened, I know my mom and girlfriend is worried sick I just miss my life, this dark nightmare stuff isn't for me." "And you think it's for us!" She said defensively you think we liked spending our teenage years here! This is not all about you. We are prisoners too so just watch what you're saying ok!" "I'm sorry

I didn't mean it that way, I didn't mean to offend you, you are right none of us chose this. Jason pulls out a marker and hands it to Latrice. "What is this for she said? Put a cross on your head it worked for us earlier he was about to be eaten alive and

suddenly we killed the dog with little effort consider it a good luck charm. It won't stop them totally but we are in purgatory and crosses do work against the devil "She agreed reluctantly and allowed Jason to draw a black cross on her forehead. Wendy lined up to receive a cross as well. After everyone was branded they decided to rest a little bit more. They all nestled up on the bunk beds and went to sleep. All the planning had made them drained and depleted.

After a 3 hour nap they all stretched their limbs and got up. It was training time. Latrice reminded them that they must be trained. She began to remove the weapons from the wall and began tossing them to the floor.

"How many dogs have you actually killed since you're an expert?" "12" Latrice replied. Both guys stood there in silence. She reached in the trunk and pulled out a dog skull to prove it. "Wow" both guys responded. Wendy has killed 8, she added. Both guys turned and looked at innocent looking Wendy astonished.

"Well ok were ready I guess" Jason said. Latrice began to show them the proper swinging and striking motion when fighting the hounds. "Every move is critical they are fast and strong, you must aim for the chest stomach and head. We have protective braces for the legs and arms just in case they try to bite you. If ever they are on top of you try to control the head with your forearms." It's a critical move that will save your life. You must impale them it is the only way they will die cuts and lacerations

don't seem to do anything against them. They have claws and they can rip through you pretty easily. The general idea is to stick and move never let them corner you or pin you down, and if there are too many of them just run for your life to the nearest safety post. Safety post can usually be found by following white crosses on trees they will always to a human settlement and a safe place."

"Got it" Jason said, but it's still a little bit intimidating. "I'm with it" said Terrell he picked up one of the daggers and started swiping it through the air. "this some Zena and Hercules shit I'm with this." "more like Zelda" Terrell said laughing trying to get

his mood up. She also brought out some pelt like armor. These pelts came from them, she explained. They are really thick and can stop them from biting down on you too easily I made vest for all of us. The group of four spent the rest of the evening practicing with each other. The need to survive made them developed stronger bonds almost even relationships. Jason naturally took to Wendy and Terrell naturally too to Latrice.

Gerald?

Meanwhile, closer to the original road, in which they began, Charles was opening the door to release yet another helpless victim. He opened the door and hurled the old man down on the pavement not saying a word, laughing the entire time. The man

was named Gerald Fisher, a fifty-four-year-old retired marine. Mr. Charles had abducted from the parking lot of a grocery store. Gerald was fit old guy and intimidating looking, he was tied up really tight implying that Charles had struggled with him.

The car sped of up the street in the direction that it came.

Gerald picked himself up from the ground dusting off his shirt. Charles had untied him “I can’t believe this shit, where in the hell am I” he shouted out in the cold night air. “I know my wife, put them up to this shit, if she wanted a divorce she should have just asked for one.” Gerald began to walk up the street slowly, he checked his phone

several times he had no calls, and he couldn't get any service either. He knew he had been kidnapped but he couldn't comprehend why, the driver didn't take any money or valuables. Confused and bewildered he just kept walking whistling to himself, Gerald sang old songs from al green and Patti LaBelle to pass time . After walking for a while he noticed a large dog sitting in the middle of the street on the road up ahead . Being an ex-marine he knew coyotes and wolves were nothing to play with when caught hunting alone, he didn't hesitate to grab a large piece of iron that was left on the side of

the road. The dog just looked at him sitting still panting wagging its large tail. He just seemed to be waiting. They both waited there together for almost ten minutes.

The one thing that stood out to Gerald is that, it was large even for a wolf. Gerald began to make noises hoping it would go away.

"Shoo, get, go away, I don't have any food stupid dog." He even threw a pine cone at the sitting animal as well as sticks and whatever else he could find. The pine cone angered the animal. Its malevolent eyes began to glow, that's when Gerald knew for sure it was not a wolf, coyote or dog. "What in the hell is that, Gerald said." The dog began running at Gerald full speed. Gerald being trained in combat, swung the iron rod right into the mouth of the leaping dog knocking it to the ground his precision was uncanny for an old guy. The dog lay there painting, wounded by not totally disabled. Gerald took this opportunity to run for his life. He knew he was too old to do battle with a wild animal. At full speed, Gerald high tailed it up the street looking for cover.

After waiting a while, he began to rejoice, the animal was out of site, he surely hoped it was dead. Gerald rested behind a log hiding, trying to catch his breath. He was quickly burning out. Suddenly he heard trotting, it was getting closer and closer. He then turned around to a frightening site. There was another animal right behind him. He slowly turned around to face the predatory animal. His fears were confirmed. It looked too different than anything he had ever seen. The eyes and face were much

different, then any wolf, and its breath smelled like death. The animal began to bite Gerald. They rolled in the leaves for minutes exchanging blows. Gerald's shirt was stained in blood.

He knew if he didn't do something critical, it was over for him, he was running out of breath. Gerald slowly positioned himself behind the animal in a martial arts type of chokehold. He applied a sleeper hold that he had learned in the military. The hold didn't seem to do much at first considering how old he was, but Gerald was able to hold the animal for 20 minutes until it ran out breath, and eventually died. He couldn't believe what he had

done he was proud of himself. He raised him- self from the ground and began to speak gasping for air. "I'm from the old school fella, we don't die easy" he said to the dog before spitting on it. Gerald wiped the blood from his mouth and began to laugh. "The few, the proud" he said laughing all the way up the street.

Soon Gerald found himself walking again for another hour. Gerald knew how to navigate but he kept finding himself going in a circle. Finally, he saw a large lake, he was thirsty among other things. He began strolling towards the lake to take a sip of water and wash his face from the attack. Gerald kept hearing the sounds of branches breaking the entire walk but he didn't see anything, he cringed in fear that there could be another one.

Gerald thought they were werewolves, he had no prior knowledge of such animals. He hunted, he knew every animal in the state. About four hundred feet from the lake, he heard a howling that sent a chill up his spine. It sounded like a cross between be- tween a howl and human moan. Another beast trotted into view shortly after panting and growling. "Man come, the hell, on, how many are there" Gerald screamed. This time he didn't have the energy to fight, this time Gerald ran for the lake. The plan was to out swim the animal. He also thought that if he got wet they would lose his scent. Gerald didn't think this time he just ran for the open waters impulsively. The animal quickly followed suit. Gerald dove into the water like an Olympic diver, and began swimming. The dog sat at the water's edge panting, you could see the smoke from its breath steaming in the night air, it refused to get into the dark lake. "What's wrong? Gerald said laughing. "You scared? Pussy puppy! , cat go your tongue."

Suddenly, Gerald felt a tug from below a powerful grip that he

had never experienced. He feared it could be gators or catfish he had fished before and seen some pretty big fish in his day. He quickly kicked whatever was swimming below him. Whatever it was, it kept pulling on him. A new struggle soon began. “It must have been the reason the animal didn’t want to jump in he thought to himself.” To his horror, he felt something like snake winding around his leg with crushing pressure. From the water’s surface, a large black tentacle appeared covered in tiny thorns and hooks and odd suction cups. It coiled around his neck like a winding serpent and pulled him below, him fighting and kicking the entire time. After moments the water stopped moving. A large pool of blood rose to the surface and spread

through the waves.

Things just get worse, bad vibes in the city

The argument had been simmering for hours, a low, crackling fire beneath the surface of Tammy and Roy's already strained relationship. Young now 20 years old she had entered the worst relationship on earth. A ghetto white girl rapper who had a cult following on youtube, she was always not far from the drama.

Now, it had finally erupted. Words, sharp and cruel, flew like poisoned darts in their small apartment on Rosedale drive. Rain lashed against the windows, mirroring the tempest inside."Get out!" Roy bellowed, his face contorted with anger. A failed entrepenuer at the ripe age of 22 he was an absolute misery to be around. "I'm done with this, Tammy. Just get out!" Tammy, her face streaked with tears, stood her ground for a moment,

defiance flickering in her eyes “Done ? I been done with you” “screw you Roy!” But

Roy's resolve was unbreakable. He grabbed her jacket and tossed it at her. The door swung open, revealing the stormy night."Fine!" she screamed, snatching the jacket. "Fine, I'll go!" She slammed the door behind her, the sound swallowed by the roar of the rain. Outside, the city was a blur of lights and shadows, distorted by the downpour. Tammy huddled against the cold, the thin jacket offering little protection.She fumbled in her pocket for a cigarette, her hands trembling. But the pack was soaked, the cigarettes ruined. Frustration washed over her, mingling with the cold and the fear. She was alone, abandoned in the storm. Twenty minutes passed. The rain showed no sign of letting up. Just as Tammy was about to succumb to despair, headlights appeared in the distance, cutting through the gloom. A large, white Cadillac, gleaming despite its age, pulled up beside her.The driver's window rolled down. An old black man with eyes that seemed to glow with an inner light stared out at her. He was dressed in a sharp, white suit, oddly out of place in the grimy urban landscape."Get in," he said, his voice a low rumble.Tammy hesitated. Every instinct screamed at her to run, to refuse. But the cold was seeping into her bones, and the promise of shelter was too tempting to resist." I... I don't have any money for a taxi cab ride ," she stammered. The old man smiled, a chillingly unnatural expression. "Charles," he said, ignoring her words. "My name is Charles. Get in, money is not a problem ."Against her better judgment, Tammy opened the car door and slid inside. The interior was surprisingly warm and dry, a stark contrast to the world outside. The car smelled of old leather and something else, something indefinably strange."Thank you," Tammy said, trying to break the silence. "I really appreciate it. I just need to get to...""Charles," the old man

interrupted, his eyes fixed on the road.Tammy fell silent, unnerved by his behavior. The Cadillac sped through the rainslicked streets, the wipers working furiously to clear the windshield. The city lights blurred past, faster and faster."Where are you going?" Tammy asked, her voice trembling."Charles," the old man repeated, his voice a low drone.A growing sense of dread washed over Tammy. There was something deeply wrong about this situation, about this man. His eyes held a strange, unsettling intensity.The Cadillac swerved off the main road and onto a dark, narrow lane. Trees loomed on either side, their branches gnarled and menacing. The headlights illuminated the dense undergrowth, casting eerie shadows."Where are you taking me?" Tammy cried, fear finally breaking through. The old man didn't

answer. He simply drove faster, deeper into the darkness. Finally, he slammed on the brakes, the car screeching to a halt."Get out," he said, his voice devoid of emotion.Tammy stared at him, her heart pounding in her chest. "I... I don't understand. Where are we?""Charles," the old man said, his eyes glowing brighter.Tammy stumbled out of the car, her legs shaking. The rain had stopped, but the air was heavy with moisture. The silence was deafening, broken only by the rustling of leaves.The Cadillac sped away, its taillights disappearing into the darkness.

Welcome to hell Tammy

Tammy was alone, stranded in the middle of nowhere. She turned around, trying to get her bearings. The woods were thick and impenetrable dark and unforgiving to the eyes . The trees seemed to watch her, their branches like skeletal arms reaching out to grab her. A low, guttural growl echoed through the

darkness. Tammy froze, her blood turning to ice. She knew, with a certainty that chilled her to the bone, that she was no longer in the real world. Charles, the old man in the Cadillac, had brought her to a place of shadows and nightmares. She ran, blindly, desperately, through the trees. Thorns tore at her clothes, branches whipped her face. But she didn't stop. She couldn't stop. Something was hunting her, something evil and ancient. She could feel its presence, a cold, heavy weight in the air. It was getting closer. The growls were louder now, mixed with a wet, rasping sound. Tammy tripped and fell, sprawling on the muddy ground. She scrambled to her feet, her eyes wide with terror. And then she saw it. Standing in the shadows, its eyes burning like hot coals, was a creature that defied description. It was tall and gaunt, its skin stretched tight over its bones. Its teeth were long and sharp, and its claws dripped with something dark and viscous .It was a demon, and it had been waiting for her. Charles had delivered her. And now, there was no escape.

Finding her way Tammy’s camp

Tammy young saturated and full of evil life opened her eyes, blinking away the grogginess from her long sleep, she was a bad girl and she owned it . She sat up in her tent, confused and afraid. It was still dark outside, but she had been asleep for ten hours. she was there voodalla the place of torment. The world around her was silent, wrapped in a thick fog that made everything seem unreal. She remembered how she got here, to Voodalla, the nightmare world she had stumbled into during an adventure with friends. Now, she was all alone. A chilling howl made her shiver. It sounded like a wolf, but something felt wrong about it. Tammy felt a surge of fear rush through her, urging her

to act. She quickly grabbed the crowbar she found inside the tent; it was heavy and comforting in her hands. With one last glance at the tent, she stepped outside. The fog swirled around her like a living thing. It was thick, and she could barely see a few feet ahead. The quiet was eerie, broken only by the occasional distant howl that made her heart race. What kind of world was this? She took a deep breath and began to walk, hoping to find a sign of life or her friends. As she walked, the night seemed to stretch on forever. Minutes turned into hours. Each step felt heavy as the shadows danced around her. She felt the weight of the darkness, pressing down on her. Just when she thought she might be lost for good, Tammy heard a noise coming from a log nearby. It was a rustling sound. Carefully, she approached the log, her crowbar ready. Peering into the gloom, she saw a small figure huddled inside. It was a woman with dark hair and frightened eyes.

The convenience store lady?

Tammy felt a mix of relief and concern. "Are you okay?" she asked softly. The woman leaned out, her expression one of surprise. "I’m fine… just hiding." Her voice was shaky. "My name is Ji-Yoon. I’ve been stuck here for days. She was a small Korean woman with gold teeth who looked oddly ghetto and oddly familiar "Tammy introduced herself, “I’m Tammy Strickland and I am lost honey” she said before chuckling, but don’t I know you, Mrs-yoon from the liquor store?” “yea 13th street food mart, yea that’s me” she said excited that someone knew her, and for the first time, she felt a glimmer of hope. "What do we do now?" she asked Ji-Yoon. "We

should stick together," Ji-Yoon replied. "This place is dangerous. There are many strange creatures here. "With

a new ally, they continued through the mist. The fog began to lift slightly, revealing the twisted trees around them. The air was cold, and they shivered as they walked. A few minutes later, they encountered a tall figure looming in front of them who walked directly into their path . It was a man, easily six feet four inches tall, with a deep voice that echoed in the empty night. “Who are you?” the man asked, stepping into the weak light. “We’re just trying to survive,” Tammy said, her heart pounding. “I’m Tammy, and this is Ji-Yoon.” “I’m Yaz,” he replied. He looked scary at first with a stern expression, but there was something goofy about his demeanor, too. “I’ve been lost here since the last full moon. You two seem like you need some help.” Tammy and Ji-Yoon exchanged glances. “Yes, please,” JiYoon said. “We need to find a way out.” Yaz nodded, and the three of them continued their journey together. As they walked deeper into Voodalla, the mist thickened again. Strange things brushed past in the shadows, and they could hear whispers that sent chills down their spines. The howls continued in the distance, sounding closer each time. “Do you think… they’re hunting us?” Tammy whispered, glancing around. “Maybe,” Yaz replied, glancing back at the darkness. “But we have to keep moving. Don’t scare yourself.” They pressed on, forming a small circle in the mist. The companionship offered a little comfort, but the dread of what loomed around them was ever-present. They talked as they walked, trying to distract themselves from the terror of the situation. Suddenly, they heard a loud crash nearby, and the ground shook. It was followed by the sound of something large moving through the bushes. “Run!” Yaz shouted, his eyes wide with fear. The three of them took off, the fog swirling around them as they sprinted into the unknown. They ran as fast as they could, but in the darkness, it was hard to see where they were

going. The howls grew louder, closer. Tammy could feel her heart pounding in her chest, her breath coming in gasps. They stumbled into a clearing where the fog was lighter. “What was that?” Ji-Yoon panted, looking behind her.“I don’t know!” Yaz said, scanning the trees. “But we need to find shelter.”Just then, a monstrous growl

echoed through the clearing, sending chills down their spines. They quickly found a tree large enough to hide behind and pressed themselves against it.They listened as the growling grew louder, and something large moved into the clearing, shrouded in mist. Tammy felt a mix of terror and curiosity, trying to make out its shape.“Whatever it is, we need to outsmart it,” Yaz whispered, quietly discussing their next steps.

With fear pushing them forward, they prepared for what lay ahead in this nightmare world of Voodalla, determined to find a way out together.

One worried mother

Mrs T. and the reverend Mrs. T sat on a wooden bench in the park, her hands resting on her lap. She watched as children played around the water fountain, their laughter ringing like bells in the air. The sun was shining brightly, and a gentle breeze made the leaves on the trees dance. But inside, Mrs. T felt heavy, as if a dark cloud hung over her heart. Jason, her son, had been missing for nearly three weeks. He had gone out one evening to meet friends but never returned. The police had done their search, and the park had been scoured, but there was still no sign of him. The days turned into nights, and the nights turned into even darker days. Mrs. T worked hard at the diner to keep her mind busy, but each time she passed his empty room, the pain surged back.As she sat there, lost in thought, she felt a familiar

touch on her shoulder. She turned to find Reverend James standing there, his eyes filled with kindness. He was an older man with gray hair and warm brown skin. He had known Jason since he was a boy, always encouraging him to join the church choir or help with community projects."Mrs. T," he said softly, sitting beside her. "I just wanted to check on you." "Thank you, Reverend," she replied, forcing a smile. "It's hard, you know? I keep looking for him around every corner. I wish I could just hear his voice again." Reverend James nodded, his expression serious. "I understand. But you have to hold on to hope. Jason was strong; I believe he will come home."Mrs. T wanted to believe him, but doubt gnawed at her. The sun began to set, painting the sky in shades of orange and purple. Children still played, but the laughter felt distant now, as shadows grew longer around them. Just then, the air felt different. A chill swept through the park, making Mrs. T shiver. She looked around

and noticed that the children had stopped playing. They stood still, looking toward the trees at the edge of the park, their faces pale. A strange mist began swirling near the bushes, creeping out like fingers reaching for the light."

Reverend, do you see that?" Mrs. T whispered, her heart racing.

He looked where she pointed and frowned. "Yes, I see it. That doesn't feel right." The mist thickened, and a haunting sound echoed through the park. It was as if whispers were carried on the wind, voices too soft to understand but filled with sorrow. The children, sensing the fear, began to back away slowly. Mrs. T and Reverend James felt rooted to their seats, unable to look away from the growing darkness. Suddenly, one of the children yelled, "Look! Someone is coming!"All eyes turned as a figure

stepped out of the mist. It was tall and cloaked in shadows, its face hidden beneath a dark hood. The figure moved slowly, gliding over the grass like it was floating. An icy dread settled in the air, causing Mrs. T's heart to race faster." Stay back, children!" Reverend James called, trying to protect them. But something in the figure's presence drew Mrs. T in. She felt an unexplainable pull, as if it belonged to her and Jason somehow. “Jason…” she whispered, her voice trembling. As if it heard her, the figure paused and slowly turned its head. The mist cleared for just a moment, revealing a significant darkness beneath the hood. "Help me," it whispered, a voice low and echoing. Mrs. T's breath caught in her throat. It was a voice she recognized, one that brought back memories of laughter and dreams. "Jason?" she cried out, standing up. "Is that you?" The figure hesitated, then stepped closer. The air felt electric, and the children gasped. They hid behind Reverend James, but Mrs. T felt driven by a force she couldn't understand. "Please return to me!" she begged. The figure began to dissolve into the mist, its form flickering as if struggling against some unseen barrier. "Mom… I'm lost…” the voice called weaker now, filled with panic. “Don't leave!” Mrs. T shouted, tears streaming down her face. “Come back to me!” But the mist wrapped around the figure again, thickening and pulling it back. The children screamed, and panic erupted in the park. Reverend James stepped in front of Mrs. T, trying to shield her from whatever this was. He raised his voice, commanding, "Leave this place! You do not belong here!" With a burst of energy, the

colors of the sunset intensified, penetrating the mist. It swirled violently, and the figure let out a final cry, "Mom!" Then, it vanished completely. The mist lifted, leaving the park silent except for the fading cries of the children. Reverend James turned to Mrs. T, his face pale. "We need to go, Mrs. T. This isn't

over yet."Mrs. T stood there, her heart breaking all over again. But deep inside, the voice still echoed in her mind. She had to find him; she had to believe that Jason was still out there, lost but not gone forever. With renewed determination, she wiped her tears and nodded at Reverend James.Together they walked away from the water fountain, knowing that the shadows were closing in, but also that hope ignited within their souls—hope that Jason would find his way home again.

And Angry Rockelle Meets JJ//

Rockelle gasped for air. Her clothes were tattered, evidence of the brutal encounter she had just survived. She had been taken earlier by a Shadow Demon, a creature of darkness and despair. Her escape was nothing short of a miracle, aided only by a small, concealed weapon she had managed to keep hidden. Each step was agony. Rockelle limped, her body screaming in protest. The forest, known as Voodalla, was notorious for its evil presence, a place where the spirits of the tortured lingered, adding to the horror of her escape. She had heard tales of Voodalla since she was a child, stories meant to frighten, but now she knew the true terror of the place. Suddenly, through the trees, she spotted a figure. A man. Hope surged through her, overriding the pain and fear. She ran towards him, desperate for help, for any sign of humanity in this nightmare." Help me!" she croaked, her voice hoarse and barely audible.The man turned, his eyes widening in shock at the sight of her. He was young, maybe a few years older than her, with kind eyes and a worried expression. "What happened to you?" he asked, his voice filled with concern." Demons… I was taken," Rockelle managed to say, her body trembling. "Demons? In Voodalla?" He seemed just as stunned as

she was. "I'm JJ," he said, extending a hand to help her steady herself. Rockelle took his hand, finding strength in his touch. "I'm Rockelle," she replied.JJ was dumbfounded, hearing her story, as he too had heard of the haunted woods, but never truly believed the tales. Together, they moved away from the immediate area, JJ supporting Rockelle as they walked."I can't believe Voodalla is real, that it tortures human spirits," JJ said, shaking his head. "I came here looking for herbs, I never expected this."As they walked, Rockelle recounted her ordeal. The Shadow Demon had appeared out of nowhere, snatching her away from her campsite. She had been camping with her boyfriend, Mark, a trip they had planned for months. But when the demon attacked, Mark had frozen, paralyzed by fear. He had watched as Rockelle was dragged away, offering no resistance."He just stood there, JJ," Rockelle said, her voice laced with anger and betrayal. "He didn't even try to save me."JJ listened intently, his expression growing darker with each word. He couldn't imagine abandoning someone like that, especially not someone he loved."He left me to die," Rockelle continued, tears streaming down her face. "How could he do that?"A bond formed between them, forged in the fires of shared trauma and disbelief. JJ, who had always been a loner, felt an immediate connection to Rockelle. He was drawn to her strength, her resilience in the face of unimaginable horror.As the days turned into nights, they found a small, abandoned cabin deep within the woods. It was dilapidated and filled with cobwebs, but it offered shelter from the elements. They cleaned it as best they could, creating a safe haven in the heart of Voodalla.During their time in the cabin, Rockelle's anger began to transform into a burning desire for revenge. She couldn't let Mark get away with his cowardice. She wanted him to suffer the way she had

suffered."I'm going back," she declared one morning, her eyes filled with determination. "I'm going to make him pay."JJ looked at her, concern etched on his face. "Rockelle, that's dangerous.

You don't know what's out there.""I don't care," she retorted. "I can't let him get away with this."JJ knew he couldn't stop her. He had seen the fire in her eyes, the unyielding resolve that had taken root in her heart. Instead, he offered to help her."Then I'm going with you," he said. "You shouldn't face this alone."Rockelle hesitated for a moment, then nodded. "Thank you, JJ," she said, a small smile gracing her lips. "I don't know what I would do without you."Together, they began to

plan their journey back to the campsite. They gathered what few supplies they had, sharpened their weapons, and prepared themselves for the dangers that lay ahead. Voodalla was a treacherous place, filled with malevolent spirits and lurking demons. But Rockelle was no longer afraid. She had a purpose, a mission, and she wouldn't let anything stand in her way.As they set off into the woods, Rockelle felt a surge of power coursing through her veins. The pain and fear were still there, but they were overshadowed by her burning desire for revenge. Mark had betrayed her, left her to die in the clutches of a demon. Now, she was coming back for him, and she wouldn't rest until he had paid the ultimate price.They traversed through the dark forest, the eerie silence broken only by the rustling of leaves and the occasional caw of a raven. JJ stayed close to Rockelle, his eyes scanning the surroundings, alert to any sign of danger. He was determined to protect her, to help her achieve her goal, no matter the cost.As they neared the campsite, Rockelle's heart pounded in her chest. She could almost see Mark's terrified face, hear his feeble excuses. The thought fueled her anger, driving her forward with renewed determination.Finally, they reached the clearing where

the campsite had been. But it was empty. The tent was gone, the fire extinguished. There was no sign of Mark.Rockelle's face fell. Had he left? Had he simply abandoned her and moved on with his life? The thought was unbearable."He's gone," she said, her voice filled with despair."Not necessarily," JJ replied, his eyes narrowing. "Look."He pointed to a set of footprints leading away from the campsite, heading deeper into the woods. They were fresh, made recently."He's still here," JJ said. "He's hiding."A sinister smile spread across Rockelle's face. "Then let's find him," she said, her voice dripping with venom. "Let's show him what happens when you betray someone in Voodalla."

Son of the devil, Brandon, Drag race and Cash baby ?

The desert air crackled with anticipation. Headlights painted streaks across the darkness as cars lined up, their engines throbbing like caged beasts. Music thumped from makeshift speakers, a chaotic blend of rap and techno. Laughter and shouts echoed, fueled by cheap beer and the thrill of the illegal race about to begin.

Brandon, son of Charles, a demon exiled from the fiery depths of Hell, leaned against his ride. It was an old white Cadillac, meticulously clean, an anomaly amongst the souped-up imports and muscle cars. The pristine white seemed to glow under the moonless sky, a stark contrast to the darkness that clung to Brandon’s soul. He wore a black muscle shirt and blue jeans. His short black hair seemed to absorb light, and his eyes, usually a warm brown, now held a flicker of something ancient and cold. Around him, the crowd was a mix of the beautiful and the reckless. There were the local girls with their tight dresses and hopeful eyes, the young men flexing muscles

they probably didn't use, and the older guys, their faces etched with years of hard living and bad decisions. They were all here for the same thing: the adrenaline, the spectacle, the chance to feel alive, even if only for a few fleeting moments. A particularly loud guffaw erupted from the DJ booth. A man with gold teeth and a backwards baseball cap pointed at Brandon's Cadillac, then back at the flame-decorated Lamborghini gleaming under the floodlights. The Lamborghini belonged to Cashbaby, an up-and-coming rapper with more money than sense and an ego to match. He was the favorite, the one everyone expected to win.

Brandon ignored the laughter. He had no need to prove anything to these mortals. He was here for a different reason, a darker purpose that only he understood. His father, Charles, the demon, had tasked him to find a particular soul, a soul ripe with darkness, perfect for Charles’s twisted designs. This race, with its inherent risk and desperate desires, was the perfect hunting ground.The flag girl, a woman with a wild look in her eyes and a checkered flag in her hand, strutted to the center of the makeshift track. The engines roared louder, a symphony of power and fury. The crowd surged forward, hungry for the start.With a flick of her wrist, the flag dropped. Cashbaby's Lamborghini shot off the line like a missile, its flames licking at the desert air. Brandon's Cadillac, in comparison, seemed to lumber forward, its engine a low growl compared to the Lamborghini's shriek. The crowd erupted in cheers for Cashbaby, their laughter mocking Brandon’s slow start. Even the flag girl smirked as the Lamborghini quickly gained a significant lead. Brandon remained unfazed. He felt a surge of dark energy within him, a familiar hum that resonated with the demonic part of his being. He was merely biding his time, waiting for the opportune moment. The track was a straight shot across the

desert floor, marked by flickering torches on either side. The Lamborghini was a speck of light in the distance, its throaty roar echoing back to the starting line. Brandon watched, his eyes narrowed, calculating the distance, the speed, the desperation radiating from Cashbaby behind the wheel. As the Lamborghini approached the finish line, a wave of triumphant cheers washed over the crowd. Cashbaby was already raising his fist in victory, basking in the adulation. Then, everything changed. Brandon slammed his foot on the accelerator. The Cadillac, seemingly possessed, surged forward with a force that defied its age and appearance. The world outside became a blur. The engine screamed, a sound that seemed to tear through the very fabric of reality. He was no longer driving the car; he was channeling the power of Hell itself. The white Cadillac became a vessel, a conduit for demonic energy. The air around it crackled with an unnatural heat.The crowd watched in stunned silence as the Cadillac closed the gap between itself and the Lamborghini with impossible speed. It was as if the car had teleported, appearing just inches behind Cashbaby's vehicle.In a final, desperate act, Cashbaby tried to swerve, to block Brandon from passing. But it was too late.As the Cadillac crossed the finish line, a blinding flash of red light erupted. A thick, acrid smoke filled the air, choking the senses. When the smoke cleared, the Lamborghini was gone. Vanished. Only a faint scorch mark on the desert floor remained, a testament to the car’s existence. The crowd stood frozen, their faces pale with terror. They had witnessed something that defied explanation, something that shattered their understanding of the world. Cashbaby, the Lamborghini, all of it, just erased from existence. Brandon brought the Cadillac to a smooth stop. The engine idled quietly, the white paint gleaming under the starlight. He stepped out of the car, his

face expressionless. The demonic energy that had coursed through him moments before had receded, leaving him seemingly ordinary.He scanned the crowd, his eyes lingering on the faces etched with fear and confusion. He had found what his father had asked him to find.Then, he turned and walked away, disappearing into the darkness, leaving behind a scene of utter chaos and disbelief. The race was over, but for the witnesses of Brandon's power, the nightmare was just beginning. They

had glimpsed the edge of Hell, and they would never be the same again. The desert wind carried the scent of sulfur and fear, a haunting reminder of the night the devil's son came to race.

PROM NIGHT

The night was crisp and ripe , the lot cleared as the kids piled onto the bus after the school dance. bad jokes filled the air as they chattered about the trip home. The gym had been alive with bright lights and music, but now, it was time to head home. The regular bus driver couldn't make it, inconvenient it would seem ,so Mr. Jones, a substitute teacher, had stepped up as the chaperone. He was kind but a little strict, ensuring that the kids behaved while they waited for a new driver to arrive.

The students settled into their seats loud and musty , some still wearing their colorful dance outfits leaving crumbs and snacks in aisle , while others changed into comfy clothes, live chatted on phones and played rap songs on i-pod radio .

Fiona, a bubbly girl with curly hair, whispered to her friends, Tom and Sasha , about how much fun they had

dancing. Meanwhile, at the front of the bus, Mr. Jones tried to keep everyone in line. “Come on, you guys,” he said, “we have to wait for the driver to arrive.” he was tired. He didn't want to come in today but somebody had to.

Minutes turned into twenty, and just as the kids began to complain about how late it was getting, a bright light flashed outside the bus. The students glanced at the window, their faces lit with interest . The outline of a large, white Cadillac rolled smoothly up to the curb. A figure emerged, and as he stepped into the light, a collective gasp filled the bus.

The man was old and wore a large hat that shaded his eyes. Long gold chains hung around his neck, and a thick, braided beard flowed down to his chest. There was something about him that felt unsettling. His presence was commanding but disturbing at the same time. He reached out to Mr. Jones to get the keys. Mr Jones then noticed what looked like , a small amount of blood on his hands. “I think you got a spot of blood there” he noted confused and a little scared. “blood?” “oh, that, that's tomato juice, when you get this age you

will need alot of it my boy, he he , yea taking a crap is miracle at this

age.” “Alright then, kids,” he boomed in a deep voice riddled with a strange accent , “I’m your new driver for the night, MR.C you can call me ” As he climbed aboard, the air in the bus seemed to shift.

“Mr. Jones, are we sure this guy is okay?” whispered Tom, glancing sideways at his friends. The substitute teacher looked equally uneasy but put on a brave face. “Just listen to him, kids. Let’s get home safe.” In head he thought to himself, where in the h-ll did they get this guy, they sure know how to pick them” none the less it was already pass eight and they wanted to drop the kids off at bus station to pick a ride with there parents. Wasn't a good fit but they didn't have a choice. A dead silence filled the air as he settled in.

The driver introduced himself as Mr. C. He had an odd way of speaking, mixing strange phrases with laughter that sent shivers down the kids' spines. “Let’s take a little trip, shall we?” he said with a wide, unsettling grin his

teeth stained his eyes wide and dead , he looked like something out a horror film rather than a driver . The tires began rolling and the door closed quickly bringing in the last of the cold night air. “quiet down children” Mr. Jones said loudly he didn't like all the noise.”

The bus started rolling down the dimly lit street. As they drove away from the school, the familiar streets faded. Everything around them turned dark, shadows loomed, and the moonlight struggled to shine through the thick trees lining the forgotten road. He didn't seem to know the way to the bus station or even the way to freeway .

“Where are we going I never seen this part of the city before ?” Fiona asked nervously, peering out the window. The road twisted downward, and the bus bounced along potholes as the darkness embraced them.

“Just a shortcut,” Mr. c replied, his tone almost playful. “Don’t worry, kids!” But there was an edge to his voice that made it hard to trust him.

Suddenly, the bus hit a bump, and everyone jolted. “Whoa!” said Sarah, gripping her seat. The kids began to murmur nervously at the chaotic driving. “Can you slow down?” Tom shouted, but Mr. c only laughed, seemingly enjoying the wild ride. He then lit up a cigar that was quickly stopped by Mr. Jones. “aye, you know this is a school bus right, you cant smoke that on here” “right, a school bus” Mr. Charles said begrudgingly. “what in the heck was the wrong

with this guy, Mr. jones pondered taking a sip of Gatorade.

"They need to learn to embrace the darkness," he cackled, glancing in the rearview mirror with a glint in his eye that sent chills down their spines. The kids looked at each other, fear creeping into their hearts. “what did he say” one of the children whispered.

As they descended further down the hill, the surroundings grew increasingly strange. The trees looked gnarled, their branches twisted like skeletal hands reaching out. The only light came from the bus's

headlights, illuminating eerie shapes that flitted in the shadows.

“Mr. Jones!” Fiona cried, her voice shaky. “Maybe we should just go back!” The rest of the kids exchanged worried glances, but their teacher’s face was set in worry, his eyes searching Mr. C’S reflection.

“Where are we?” Mr. Jones asked, his voice firm. “You said a shortcut, but this seems wrong.”

Mr. C turned to him with a wide grin. “Oh, don’t worry. We’re just getting to the fun part!” And with that, he slammed down on the accelerator, sending the bus careening down the steep hill.

Rocking and swaying the bus struggled terribly down a steep neighborhood hill knocking down several mailboxes along the way.

Screams filled the bus as they tumbled faster and faster into the night, the trees becoming blurry streaks of darkness. Suddenly, the bus hit a bump so hard that everyone flew briefly out of their seats. When they landed, it felt as though they had entered an abyss. Now snug motionless everyone breathed heavily silently not looking up, assuming they were dead at the most.

In one sudden moment, the bus's lights flickered and then went out, plunging them into darkness. Panic erupted; kids screamed, and cries filled the air.

“Mr. Jones! What do we do?” Tom shouted. Attempting to keep calm, Mr. Jones shouted over the noise, “Everyone, stay calm! We’ll find a way out of this!” Mr Jones began looking for a weapon but couldn't find anything.

But before he could say anything more, a sharp turn careened them off the road. The bus skidded, and Mr. C’s laughter echoed through the night. “Welcome to my world, kids!”

“prepare to meet my brothers,.....you see.....”breathing heavily” they are awfully hungry this time of night, were going a little trip you little boogers, to place where everybody get their due, were going to Vood-daaaa-llaaaa!” he began to lave hysterically be lighting up large cigar, “and on top of that i think i will have my self a little smoke”he said sarcastically. his grizzly looking face had morphed into demonic caricature animated of pure evil

, small horns protruded from his forehead and gleamed in the moon light.

He turned around and lights webt black, only his large hat ember like red eyes and claws in the moon light shown . His clawed nails slowly wrapped around the steering wheel, and the large older model bus, aggressively swayed from left to right.

“ VOODALLA? is that a like quick trip of seven eleven , I'm starving I could use a snack ” “what?” “you not

serious, tell me you not serious” “the young white girl looked away in shame, young and unaware she didn't realize what she had just said.

The bus almost turned over on its side after a roller coaster of bumps , they all scream in a chorus of horrifying sounds, after tumbling down a dramatic large residential neighborhood. It was like a bad dread but real, and they couldn't wake up. “man I cant believe this mess,” mr. Jones said dialing 911 on his phone, the operator , quickly became distressed and couldnt here him.” “hello come quick, we have been kidnapped!” he said desperately, speaking lowly so mr. c did not hear him, he didn’t know what this evil man was capable of.

Just as quickly as it started, the bus came to a stop. They had suddenly arrived at a clearing lit by a ghostly light that seemed to come from the trees. But Mr. Charles , the mischievous grin still on his face, simply opened the bus doors and stepped out he glanced at them slowly grinning waving with his talon like claws , in a instant he disappeared into the fog by the trees .

The kids were left in deafening silence, breathlessly staring at the darkness outside. After doing role call turned out several kids where missing , never found again, it was like they just disappeared . He had taken them but nowhere knew to where or how?

“Where did he go?” Sarah whispered, fear creeping back in crawling along the floor afraid to stand .

“We need to get back home,” Mr. Jones said, trying to keep his voice steady. But deep down, they all knew that something was wrong, and whatever Mr. Charles had in mind, they were not ready for it he seemed dark and without reason or thought almost an evil judge of sorts.

They were trapped in the dark, and the night was far from over. The police arrived an hour later, and found no evidence of Mr. C- and the bus driver department had no idea who they were talking about.

The sun hung low in he hood, painting the sky in dull orange and grey. Mrs. T walked with heavy steps toward "Tony's Pizza Palace." That’s what it used to be called she wasn’t one for keeping up with changes Her son, Jason , had been gone for seven grueling long months. Every day was a dull ache in her chest of her missing little boy that’s how she remembered him.

The police had no leads. But Mrs. T had one person in mind: Brandon, the young man who worked the late shift at the pizza place. She had got a hot lead on him although they could not confirm foul play. He was even seen on camera with them but still no conviction. Brandon. He had served Jason his last known order and he worked at second job at the hotel they worked at .

He had a strange, cold look in his eyes for a young man, that Mrs. T remembered clearly from the grainy security footage they had shown her.She pushed open the glass door of Tony's Pizza. A small bell jingled, sounding too cheerful for the mood inside. The air smelled strongly of burnt cheese and oregano.Frita, a girl with bright pink hair who sometimes worked the counter, was wiping down a table. She looked up, her smile fading when she saw Mrs. T's set jaw."Can I help you, ma'am?" Frita asked, her voice a little too high."I need to speak to Brandon," Mrs. T said, her voice flat and hard. "Now."Frita glanced nervously toward the back kitchen door. "He's in the back, busy with the dough." She wasn’t sure if she should let a customer summon someone it could be dangerous.Just then, Brandon stepped out from the kitchen. He was tall and thin and remarkably handsome for such an evil person , wiping flour from his hands onto a stained

apron. He did not look surprised to see Mrs. T. he was almost even amused that she was still trying."Mrs. T," Brandon said, his voice smooth as oil. "Didn't expect you back here.""Don't play games with me, Brandon," Mrs. T spat. She walked right up to the counter, ignoring the few customers huddled over slices of pepperoni. "Where is my son?" it was cleared she was not here for the buy one get one free pizza deal.Brandon leaned against the counter, crossing his arms. "I told the police already. I served Terrell a large meat lover's, he paid, he left. That's all I know." He worked at the hotel we didn’t talk much there either , didn’t really know the guy""You are lying," Mrs. T insisted, her voice rising. Frita dropped her damp rag."Ma'am, you

need to leave," Brandon warned. His eyes, usually a light brown, seemed darker today, almost black in the dim lighting of the restaurant."I won't leave until you tell me what you did to him!" Mrs. T cried, tears finally starting to sting her eyes. "He was my only boy! You look like something that steals the light from people!" “ I won’ stop until he is found.”Brandon’s face tightened. A strange stillness fell over the restaurant. Even the sound of the soda machine seemed to stop as spectators tuned in."You keep pushing, Mrs. T," Brandon said, his voice dropping to a low rumble that made the floor vibrate slightly. "You don't know what you're dealing with."Mrs. T felt a surge of desperate anger. She looked around wildly. Near the register was a basket of plastic cutlery meant for takeout orders. Her hand shot out and grabbed a long, silver-colored plastic fork. It felt flimsy, but it was a weapon."I know you hurt him!" she screamed, holding the fork out like a tiny spear. "Tell me where Terrell is, or I swear I will carve the truth out of you!" “ you weak street punk, preying on hardworking people children then returning to work, like nothing happened”Brandon did not flinch from the threat of the plastic

utensil. Instead, a slow, terrifying smile spread across his face. It was not a human smile. It was too wide, too sharp."A fork?" Brandon chuckled, a dry, rattling sound. "That is what you choose to bring against me?"Before Mrs. T could react, Brandon moved. It wasn't a fast movement, but it was sudden. He reached out and snatched the plastic fork right out of her grip. An incinerating heat melted her trey and her fork.Mrs. T gasped, stepping back, bumping into Frita, who was frozen in fear.As Brandon held the plastic fork between his thumb and forefinger, something impossible happened. The cheap, flimsy material began to glow. It didn't just get hot; it turned a deep, angry orange, like the metal of a blacksmith’s forge. A faint wisp of smoke curled up from the handle.Mrs. T stared, her mouth hanging open in absolute horror. This was not a simple pizza delivery boy. The heat radiating off the plastic was intense, scorching the air between them.Brandon looked at the glowing fork, then slowly turned his gaze back to Mrs. T. The intensity in his eyes was crushing."Go home, Mrs. T," he hissed. The air around him seemed to shimmer. "Forget about Jason . He belongs to something much older now something supernatural . Try to come back here, and this little toy," he tapped the glowing tip of the fork, "will be the least of your worries."The heat was unbearable. Mrs. T dropped the invisible barrier of fear and let out a raw, piercing scream that echoed off the tiled

walls. She stumbled backward, grabbing Frita's arm hard enough to bruise."Run!" Mrs. T shrieked, pulling Frita toward the exit.They burst through the door, leaving the clatter of dropped trays behind them. As they fled down the sidewalk, Mrs. T looked back through the greasy window one last time. Brandon stood exactly where he was, the glowing fork still in his hand, watching them go, the terrifying smile still fixed on his face."You are going to

pay for this!" Mrs. T screamed in anger, into the darkening street, dragging the whimpering Frita with her. The smell of burning cheese mixed with something metallic and plastic and wrong seemed to cling to them as they ran away from Tony's Pizza Palace. They didn't know what Brandon was, but they knew one thing for certain: Jason was lost, and whatever took him was hungry for more.

(House of carlos)

Carlos sat on his worn sofa. He was twenty-five years old and home. Big headphones covered his ears. Loud sounds came from the game flashing on the big TV screen behind him. He was deep into a virtual battle. His focus was total. He was a free-loader , trying to save a buck for a new car, but his mom loved him and hated living alone , yoshi his sister would go to college soon so she didn't mind the overstay.

In three days, his mother was leaving. She was going to visit his aunt in another state. That meant the house would be quieter, just him and his sister, Yoshi. Yoshi was still home, usually locked in her room studying or doing whatever teenage girls did she was territorial and lived in her own world.

Tonight was important. Carlos had plans. He was meeting a girl named Shay. He had met her last week at the mall. She was nice, funny, and she agreed to come over to

watch a movie. The month of october was lonley with out jason, This was his first real date in a long time. outside of playing basketball he felt bare and

blank.

He looked at the kitchen clock. Shay would be here soon. Time to prepare. He pulled off his headphones. The game sounds died down.

“I’m making pizza!” he called out.

He walked to the kitchen. He pulled out a frozen pizza from the freezer. It was a pepperoni special, his favorite.

Just as he put the pizza on the counter, Yoshi walked in, rubbing her eyes. She looked tired but immediately focused on the pizza box.

“What are you doing with that?” Yoshi asked, her voice sharp.

“Making dinner. For Shay,” Carlos replied, already preheating the oven.

Yoshi frowned. “But that’s the good one. The extra cheese.” “So? I’m having a guest.”

Yoshi leaned against the counter. “I was saving that. I had a terrible day studying. I deserve that pizza.”

“Tough luck, Yoshi. You snooze, you lose. I bought it.”

“No, you didn’t,” Yoshi argued, pointing a finger at him. “Mom bought that last Tuesday specifically for family movie night.

Which is tonight, right?”

Carlos hesitated. His mom had mentioned family movie night, but Shay was coming. He needed this date to go well.

“Look, I’ll buy you a new one tomorrow. A better one,” Carlos offered, trying to keep the peace.

Yoshi crossed her arms. “No. I want that one now. You can order something cheap for your date.”

They stood in silence, glaring at each other over the cardboard box.

“Fine,” Carlos sighed, reaching into his pocket. He pulled out a crumpled five-dollar bill. “Here. Take five dollars. Go buy yourself two cheap pizzas if you want. But this one is mine.” “make it fifteen and you got a deal, stop eating up everything Carlos, you are such a pig, go to the store!” she yelled.

Yoshi snatched the money quickly, a small victory on her face. “Deal.” She stomped out of the kitchen, muttering about selfish older brothers.

Carlos quickly put the pizza in the oven. He cleaned the living room, making sure the cushions were fluffed. He even found the remote that always disappeared.

A few minutes later, the doorbell rang. Shay was here. She looked even prettier than she did at the mall. She was carrying a big bag of salty snacks. Jiggling her keys she smiled from ear to ear.

“Hi, Carlos,” she smiled. “Hey, Shay. Come in.”

The living room felt cozy. Carlos opened a window just a crack. It was a warm evening, and a slight breeze would be nice. They settled onto the sofa. The pizza smell was starting to fill the air.

Carlos put on the movie they picked, a well-known scary film.

They laughed a few times during the less frightening parts. Carlos felt comfortable with Shay. He was starting to forget about his mother leaving and his fight with Yoshi.

Then, the draft started. It wasn’t just a gentle breeze. The open window allowed a sudden, noticeable draft to sweep across the room. It felt cold, unnaturally cold for a summer evening.

The lights in the hallway flickered once.

Shay shivered and looked towards the window. “Wow, that wind picked up fast.”

Carlos nodded, but he felt a strange prickle on the back of his neck. He looked towards the window, which was still slightly ajar. The sound of the movie seemed distant now.

He heard something else. A soft, dragging sound from outside, near the garden wall.

Thump. Scrape.

It sounded like someone was walking very slowly on the gravel path.

Carlos tried to focus on the screen, telling himself it was just a neighbor’s cat or the

wind knocking something over. But the sound was rhythmic, deliberate.

He leaned forward and quickly shut the window with a solid click. He locked the latch, just in case.

“Better,” he mumbled, trying to sound casual.

Shay was focused on the screen again, thankfully not hearing the noise over the movie’s soundtrack.

Carlos relaxed a tiny bit. But as he looked past the glass, into the deepening twilight outside, he saw it.

A shadow.

It wasn't the shadow of a tree or a passing car. It was tall and thin, moving against the faint light coming from the streetlamp. It was walking along the edge of their property line, just where the garden ended.

He blinked hard. The shadow paused.

It was definitely a figure. Too tall for Yoshi. Too slow for a jogger. It seemed to be looking directly at the house, directly at the living room window where he and Shay sat.

Carlos felt a sudden, icy fear replace the warmth of the evening. He kept his eyes fixed on the glass, even though he was sitting inside. The figure didn't move again, just stood there, a dark stain against the fading light.

He couldn't tell Shay. Not now, not when they were just starting to have fun. He needed to confirm what he was seeing.

He casually reached for the TV remote, pretending to adjust the volume, but his eyes never left the window. The shadow shifted slightly, and for a split second, Carlos thought he saw something pale move where a face should be.

He quickly grabbed the curtains and yanked them shut, plunging the room into near total darkness, illuminated only by the scary movie playing on the TV.

“What are you doing?” Shay whispered, startled.

“Just… it was too bright in here,” Carlos lied, his heart hammering. “Let’s get back to the movie.”

He sat back down, pulling Shay a little closer, pretending it was comfort, but really, he was using her as a shield. The pizza, now forgotten, sat cooling on the counter, its scent mixing with the heavy sense of dread that now filled the small living room. He knew, deep down, that whatever was outside was still there, even though he couldn't see it anymore.

STOP THE MADNESS

Yoshi leaned against the brick wall, casually and free care, scrolling through her phone she laughed at few message sent by her grandmother earlier . The evening air was thick and warm and without mercy, night was approaching. Misty falls for known from crime after sunset , so the clock was ticking. Across the street, Maya was walking towards her, a bright yellow Gucci bag swinging from her shoulder. her home girl, Called Meme by some or Maya by others, she was a close friend from around the way.

“Hey, Girl,” Yoshi called out, not looking up immediately.

Maya reached her, dropping her bag with a soft thud. “Hey boo, she said to Yoshi. You won’t believe the drama at the bus stop today.”

Yoshi finally looked up, her eyes wide with mock seriousness. “Spill it. Was it the usual homeless guy arguing with the pigeons, let me stop?” she had a dark sense of humor and a pessimism that would not end.

Maya laughed, a quick, breathy sound. “Worse. It was about a free sample of suspiciously purple soda and chips, But forget that. You look jumpy. Everything okay?”

“Yeah, I guess if you want to call it that ,” Yoshi said, glancing down the long, quiet street. The streetlights hummed, casting long, shaky shadows. “Just a little weird vibe tonight, that's all . This neighborhood gets creepy after dark, not ghetto creepy.”

Maya followed her gaze. “It’s just quiet. That’s all.”

As they stood there talking, a low, strange humming noise started to drift toward them gradually from the back ground . It sounded like an engine sputtering, but uneven, almost wet. It was too light to be a car , or bus.

“What is that sound?” Maya whispered, her tone shifting from playful to cautious playfully trying to show off her new deigner jogging suit and boots.

Yoshi squinted down the road. A figure was approaching rapidly on a scooter, he just looked reckless and out of his mind. It was hard to make out details at first, but the way the rider moved was jerky, unnatural..

“Is that guy okay?” Yoshi murmured. “He’s weaving all over the place, dont tell me he drunk , I got misty falls pd on speed dial .”

Then, as the figure got closer, the horror of the sight hit them both like a physical blow. The rider was pale, almost grey for a black dude , wearing ragged clothes. But it was the eyes that froze Yoshi’s blood. They were glowing a sickly, bright yellow, like hot embers in the gloom. The that instant her blood ran cold, she shook as she fixed her glasses, the fear of being taken and never seen again like Jason was a real nightmare.

“Oh my God, Maya,” Yoshi breathed, clutching her friend’s arm lighty almost standing behind her taller friend to sheild herself .

The glowing-eyed man wasn't just riding; he was focused entirely on an older woman walking slowly a few yards ahead of him, struggling with

two heavy grocery bags. The evil intent was obvious, but the outcome was unclear, the city was known for crime of all varieties.

“Look at his face,” Maya stammered, stepping back toward the wall. “He looks… dead, for real girl,.”

The man on the scooter revved the engine one last time, a guttural, unnatural roar, and then he accelerated straight toward the woman. His head was dipped low and he looked psychotic and asleep at the same time. There was no attempt to swerve or slow down. It was pure, focused aggression crack head or not he was a sight to be seen .

“He’s going to hit her!” Yoshi yelled, her voice cracking.

The attack was swift and brutal. The scooter flew by the woman’s side.

She cried out, dropping her bags, groceries scattering across the pavement in a horrifying mess of broken jars and spilled fruit. The man didn't stop. He brought the scooter to a jarring halt right next to her crumpled form, his glowing eyes fixed on her. He made a strange, clicking sound with his mouth.

“That’s not road rage,” Maya gasped, tears welling up. “That’s… that’s one of those Nightbuddies.”

Yoshi’s mind raced, snapping into survival mode. She remembered the hushed, terrified whispers online about the ‘Nightbuddy Zombies’—the ones that weren't slow and shuffling, but fast, fueled by strange energy, and driven by senseless, sudden violence. Voodoo Zombie, they called them sometimes. They just appeared, full of rage, attacking anyone in

their path.

“We have to go, right now,” Yoshi insisted, pulling Maya away from the wall. “Don’t look at him.”

Yoshi fumbled for her phone, her hands shaking so badly she almost dropped it. She managed to unlock the screen and dial the emergency taxi number she always kept saved.

The man on the scooter started to lean off his seat, his movements slow but deliberate, like a predator deciding on the next move. His glowing gaze flickered momentarily toward Yoshi and Maya.

“Hello, i said hello ? I need a cab, like right now . Corner of Elm and Fourth. Fast, please and no crappy ones !” Yoshi kept her voice low but urgent into the receiver.

“Yoshi, he saw us!” Maya hissed, pressing herself flat against the brickwork.

“I know, I know. Just stay quiet.”

The zombie-like figure started to push off the ground, seemingly abandoning the fallen woman to pursue the new targets. The squeal of the scooter tires was high-pitched and frantic as he turned. “somebody stop him the woman yelled from the ground” “thief stop him!”

“Hurry up! He’s coming this way!” Yoshi screamed into the phone.

“Ma’am, my driver is three blocks out,” the dispatcher’s calm voice replied, infuriatingly slow.

The glowing man on the scooter was closing the distance fast. His face was contorted in a silent snarl twisted evil face so ugly it turned the blood cold on sight , revealing too many teeth.

“He’s almost here, Maya! Get ready to run!” Yoshi shouted, shoving her phone into her pocket.

Just as the scooter rounded the final corner separating them, a set of headlights flooded the street. A familiar, slightly beat-up taxi skidded to a halt directly in front of Yoshi and Maya, its door flying open. It was another ride-buddy driver!

“oh heck no, not again, where's our compensation for the first disappearance, ask your CEO where's by brother” the Korean driver shrugged confused. “you want a ride or not?” “heck no! they said in unison” “i heard about them two girl , missing bodies aint cute sweety” the car sped off. “what now?”

a city bus pulled up a minute later while the crazy man was distracted by evening traffic , people pulled out their phones and taped the the yellow eyed lunatic terrorizes the road way.

“Drive! Go! Go!” Yoshi shrieked at the driver. the bus driver shut the door as the two girls rushed to wind phone in hand looking at the

voodoo possess man marauding around in broad day light. After being filmed, The man hopped back on his scooter slobbing from the mouth making clicking noises and rode off with the woman's groceries. It was the creepiest crime they had ever seen.

“Did we lose him?” Maya whispered, hugging her knees to her chest.

Yoshi watched until the street was clear, the only light coming from the passing streetlamps. “I think so. But that was too close, Maya. Too close.”

“You knew what it was?” Yoshi asked, her voice trembling with delayed adrenaline.

“We all know what they are,” a woman said , “honey Just stay inside after sunset. These Night buddies things don’t play fair.” they are often caught by law but them more of them pop up at night and disappear by sunset not remembering a dang thing.”

A walk with shadows

Months had gone by traumatized by her first encounter she treaded lightly but the the strange relentless energy remained. Yoshi stepped off the train. She usually didn’t stay out late but the concert took a while. She told her brother Carlos to be on the look out for her, she really didn't like to walk by a her

self, a sixteen year old black girl known to dress in a saucy manner that some thought seemed provocative “ I wonder what Ma is cooking tonight” she thought to her self scrolling through her music in her phone. The air was cool and filled with autumn vapor, thick, like a heavy blanket settled over the city. She was sixteen, and this was her first time walking this far alone after dark. She clutched the strap of her backpack, the vinyl straps digging slightly into her shoulder. Step by step she cautiously made her way up the street.

She pulled out her phone and clicked on her music. Rihanna’s voice filled her ears, a strong, familiar sound that pushed back the quiet of the late evening. She popped the white earbuds in, the world instantly shrinking to the beat in her head. her lips moving lightly singing along to all of the words.

The street she walked onto was long and narrow. The sun had set hours ago, and the few streetlights that fought the darkness seemed weak and tired. The storefronts lining the road were all dark, their big windows like empty black eyes staring out at nothing. It was too late for any shops to be open.

Yoshi adjusted her glasses. They were new and she kept finding herself pushing them up her nose. She didnt have the best of vision. She kept her head down, focusing on the cracked pavement moving under her worn sneakers. The music helped. It made her feel brave, like she was moving through a movie scene, not just

walking home.

As she rounded a corner, she thought she heard something unusual beneath the loud music. A low rumble. She paused, taking one earbud out. leaves blew wildly as she looked around, Misty Falls was

known for all types of predators.

The sound was faint at first, like a distant wasp buzzing. Tires rolling slowly. The wheels of a heavy automobile squeaked slowly across the ground.

She listened hard. The street was supposed to be empty this late. She put her earbud back in, trying to ignore it, convincing herself it was just a late bus or a delivery truck far away. Adrenaline pumped through her veins, like a cascading river of doubt and fear .She started walking faster, matching her pace to the quicker beat of the song in her ears.

The rumbling noise grew louder. It was definitely getting closer, not farther away.

Curiosity, sharp and unwelcome, pricked at her. She risked another glance back over her shoulder, her heart starting a nervous little tap dance against her ribs.

Nothing was there yet, but the sound was much closer now, a heavy, dragging noise. She pulled both earbuds out this time, letting the silence of the empty street rush in, making the sound of the engine very clear.

The rolling slowed, almost crawling, right behind her. Then, the sound changed. The slow rolling turned into a steady, faster movement. The car was picking up speed.

Yoshi’s breath hitched. Instinct took over. She broke into a clumsy run, her backpack bouncing heavily.

That’s when she saw it. A huge, dark shape coming up fast behind her. It had no

lights on. No headlights, no

taillights. Just a massive shadow eating up the distance.

She risked a quick, terrified look back over her shoulder. In the faint spill of light from a distant, flickering streetlight, she saw the shape resolve itself. It was a car, huge and boxy, the kind of vehicle that looked like it belonged in an old monster movie. And she knew it.

It was the Cadillac Man’s car. They talked about him in the neighborhood but no one believed such a crazy story. But her family knew different they believed it was what happened to Jason months ago. Fear intestified making the hair from her lofty braids stand on end.

The stories about him—the strange man who haunted this part of the neighborhood after dark, who never said a word but always seemed to be looking for someone—suddenly felt too real.

Panic flooded her system. She fumbled with her glasses, trying to push them up one last time to get a clearer view of the road ahead, but her hands were shaking too hard.

The car was right there. Too close.

She tried to change direction, aiming for the shadows between two closed buildings, hoping to duck out of sight. She moved too fast for her own legs. Her left foot twisted awkwardly on a broken piece of curbstone.

A sharp, blinding pain shot up her leg. She cried out, a small, trapped sound swallowed by the night. She fell

hard onto her hands and knees.

The impact knocked her glasses clean off her face. They flew forward, landing

somewhere in the dark pavement ahead of her.

The world dissolved into a blur of muted colors and threatening shapes. Everything was fuzzy and huge without her lenses.

The roaring engine of the Cadillac was deafening now. It slowed right beside where she was sprawled on the cold ground. She could smell old gasoline and something metallic, like rust.

She squeezed her eyes shut, certain this was it. The thick, dark shadow of the car loomed over her. She waited for a door to open, for a hand to reach out.

But then, through the blurry shapes, a different light caught her eye. Not the dark shape of the car, but a small, steady glow, further up the street, almost at the top of the slight hill.

It was faint, yellow, and warm.

It was the light spilling from her Grandmother’s kitchen window.

A fresh surge of adrenaline, stronger than the pain in her ankle, jolted through her. Safety. Home.

Ignoring the throbbing in her leg, Yoshi scrambled forward on her hands and one good knee, crawling desperately toward that warm yellow square. She couldn't see clearly, but she knew the path to the porch steps.

She heard the car door creak open slowly. A shadow detached itself from the driver's seat.

The man got out, his face concealed in the darkness, a long grey dreadlocked beard beaded with strange ornaments, gold chains shined lightly in the moon light. She could not see his eyes only a large hat and a tall slender body. One observation took her breath away while rising to her feat she saw large claw like finger nails moving

freely as he walked. “oh my god” she said in panic. One thing ran through her mind. “RUN” at five feet three she was no match for the evil man that took jason. she ran full speed barely able to see the street signs. Panting and breathing she looking back to see him trotting closely behind his dress shoes clicking as he jogged. she looked left and right , what on earth could she do. The house was too blocks away, but her grandmothers house was even closer, unfortunately she couldn't see the street signs clearly. she pulled out her phone and auto dialed her grandmother Pearl. she just kept running and ran behind a tree. Breathing hard she looked around to see him. He looked around as if she didn't see her. “ I just wanted to give you a ride home” the man said, he didn't even sound friendly to her, and then it happend? her phone rattled with a text message I’m on the corner of the street baby, where are you , I was just coming from the supermarket buying some chicken for your grandfather. She looked around and saw a big park sign. I am by the park entrance , she texted nervously, shaking the entire time. She looked again and didn’t see Charles, she figured he had lost her. In a matter of minutes a small purple car turned towards the park entrance sign lights beaming, she was so happy she could not stop the tears on her face limping with no glasses she ran towards the open car door

throwing her self in . she was safe, after minutes she started to breath normally, she took a puff and said, ‘I saw the cadillac man Grandma” “oh really she said, I am glad you called me my heart cant take another missing grandbaby” “you did the right thing sugar she said before giving her a fearful hug and looking around.” they slowly road off down the street. One the corner of her eye she saw the large car with rolling off into into a dark street.

The beginning of the body of Charles

CHARLES FIRST BODY, The sun dipped low, painting the Louisiana sky in hues of orange and purple. But the beauty of the sunset was lost on the scene before me. Old Silas lay

sprawled on the dusty ground, his lifeless eyes staring blankly at the sky. The swamp, usually a symphony of chirps and croaks, seemed to hold its breath in mournful silence. Silas, a man as old as the moss-draped trees around us, had been a victim of a hate crime. The cruel irony was hard to swallow. In this land of bayous and beauty, hatred still festered like a poisonous weed.

Sheriff Brody, a man whose face was etched with years of hard living, knelt beside the body, his gaze heavy. "Damn fools," he muttered, his voice thick with anger and grief. "When will it end?" Deputy Johnson, a young man fresh out of the academy, stood by, his face pale. This was his first taste of the ugliness that lurked beneath the surface of their sleepy town.As the last rays of sunlight faded, an eerie mist began to rise from the swamp.

The sounds of the bayou intensified, creating a symphony of dread. Suddenly, a blinding light erupted from the heart of the swamp. It was an orb, a sphere of pure, incandescent energy, blazing like a miniature sun.The orb hovered over the murky water for a moment, then began to drift towards us. It moved with unnatural speed, skimming just above the ground, its light casting long, dancing shadows. Brody, a man of science and reason, could only stare in disbelief. Johnson fumbled for his gun, his hand trembling. I, a humble journalist covering the local news, felt a chill crawl down my spine, a primal fear gripping my heart. The orb stopped directly above Silas's body. It pulsed with light, casting the old man's corpse in an ethereal glow. Then, without a sound, it plunged into Silas, disappearing into his chest. For a moment, nothing happened. The swamp held its breath. Then, Silas's body convulsed. His limbs twitched, his back arched, and a guttural groan escaped his lips. Brody and Johnson took a step back, their eyes wide with terror. I stood frozen, my pen and notepad forgotten in my trembling hands . Silas's eyes

snapped open. But they were no longer the eyes of the kind old man we knew. They glowed with an unnatural red light, burning with malevolent energy. A grin stretched across his face, revealing teeth that were black and sharp, like the teeth of a predator. He rose from the ground, his movements jerky and unnatural. He stood tall, his eyes fixed on us, and a voice, not Silas's voice, rasped from his throat. "It is good to walk the earth again." Brody, despite his fear, found his voice. "Silas? Is that you?" The figure chuckled, a chilling sound that echoed through the swamp. "Silas is gone. I am Charles. And I have waited a long time for this." Charles took a step towards us, and the air crackled with energy. John son raised his gun, but Brody grabbed his arm. "Don't! You don't know what you're dealing with. "I knew, though. I had heard the stories, the legends whispered in hushed tones around campfires. Charles, they said, was a demon, a spirit of vengeance who dwelled in the swamp, waiting for a chance to walk the earth again." What do you want?" Brody asked, his voice shaking. Charles's red eyes gleamed in the darkness. "Justice," he hissed. "An eye for an eye. A life for a life."He turned his gaze towards the town, his black teeth bared in a predatory grin. "And I know just where to start."We stumbled backward, fear propelling us away from the resurrected Silas. We knew what Charles was capable of. We had heard the tales of his wrath, his insatiable hunger for revenge. As Charles began to walk towards the town, the swamp seemed to come alive around him. The

trees swayed, the water bubbled, and the creatures of the night raised their voices in a chorus of dread. It was as if the swamp itself was welcoming its dark master back into the world. Brody grabbed Johnson and me. "We have to warn them," he said, his voice urgent. "We have to stop him before he reaches the town." We turned and ran, the image of Charles's glowing red

eyes and black teeth seared into our minds. We ran, knowing that the fate of our town, our lives, rested on our shoulders. We ran, knowing that we were facing something far more terrifying than anything we had ever imagined.The night was dark, the swamp was alive, and Charles, the demon, was walking the earth again. The hunt had begun.

Movie and Massacre , The Big Premier and Drivers From Hell,

. In the busy city of Crescent Falls, signs of autumn danced in the air. Leaves painted the streets in shades of orange and red. The old movie theater, known as The Silver Screen, stood proud at the end of Main Street. Tonight, it was showing a chilling new film called “Lost Shadows,” a story about people disappearing mysteriously in the city. As the crowd gathered outside, excitement buzzed through the air. Charles, a demon from hell, arrived at the theater under the cover of night walking slowly ominously without Fear or real concern . He walked with a strange swagger, that caught the attention of a few passersby.

His red eyes glowed slightly, and his long, dark coat fluttered behind him like a shadow. Despite his eerie presence, no one stopped him as he approached the entrance. “Just a regular man,” although standoffish and strange. He thought, putting on a charming smile. He reached an empty ticket booth, where a woman named Lily sat, chewing gum and scrolling on her phone. Charles carried a small animal cage wrapped in a cloth. He had a plan, and it needed just the right touch. “Good evening!” he leaned against the booth, his voice smooth like silk. “I’d like one ticket for the movie, please.” He opened the cage just enough to

reveal a tiny, fluffy creature inside. Lily looked at him, curious. “What’s that?” she asked, gesturing to the cage. “This is my service animal. He needs to be with me for emotional support,” Charles said, his eyes flicking toward the screen that buzzed with the movie trailer .Lily raised an eyebrow but felt a strange pull toward him. His presence was compelling. “Alright, I guess that’s fine. You can go in,” she said dreamily, handing him a ticket. The moment he took it, she felt something shift in the air, but she couldn’t place what it was. Charles thanked her and walked toward the entrance, the cage swinging gently in his hand. Inside the theater, people settled into their seats, ready for the frightful tale to begin. A few teens in the back row whispered to each other, their laughter mixing with the dim lights that flickered above. As the movie started, the tension grew. The screen displayed dark scenes of people disappearing into clouds of mist. Gasps and shrieks erupted from the audience as the film unfolded, revealing a city's hidden nightmares. Families huddled together, couples jumped at every loud noise, and teens mocked what they thought was a mere movie. But as the story progressed, some in the audience noticed something odd. They felt a chill sweep through the aisle. Shadows began to move in the corners of their eyes. A few people whispered, “Did you see that?” A sense of dread filled the theater. Someone reported a dark figure moving past their legs, causing a ripple of fear to spread. Charles sat in the middle of the theater, an amused smile creeping across his face as he sensed the fear building. The power of terror swept over the crowd, and he reveled in it. He knew they were oblivious to the real horrors lurking in the darkness, where shadows twisted and grew. Suddenly, without warning, the lights flickered and went out. A loud growl echoed through the theater as the audience gasped. In the pitch black,

they heard the rustling of what sounded like claws against the floor. Panic set in as the door locked with a heavy thud, trapping everyone inside. “Hurry, we need to get out!” someone shouted. Murmurs of fear turned to cries of confusion. The movie played on, but no one was watching. All attention was on the creeping fear that surrounded them. The shadows grew bolder, gliding closer. Then, from the depths of the darkness swelled a massive shadow wolf, its eyes glowing eerily in the dim light. It lunged forward, and everyone screamed. The first victim fell as the wolf’s sharp teeth sank into flesh. Blood sprayed across the theater, pooling onto the floor and causing the screams to intensify. The teens in the back row, who had previously

been laughing, quickly transformed into a team of heroes. They rallied together, their adrenaline pumping. “We can’t just sit here! We need to kick down that door!” shouted Jake, the bravest among them. He bolted towards the door, his friends in tow. “On three!” he yelled. “One, two, three!” They collided against the heavy door with all their might. It shook, but the metal remained stubbornly in place. The wolf was now darting through the aisles, grabbing at anyone in its path.“ Again!” shouted Mia, another teen, determination filling her voice. They pushed again, harder this time. The hinges creaked, and finally, the door burst open, allowing a sliver of light to flood in.“ Go, go, go!” they screamed, ushering everyone through the doorway. People scrambled past, trampling on the feet of those who hesitated.

The wolf howled, frustrated by the crowd escaping its grasp. The teens were the last to exit, and as they rushed through the door, they kicked it closed behind them. Panting, they backed away from the door just as the wolf slammed against it in fury. But teamwork had saved them. The terror of the theater and the mystery of the disappearing people would haunt Crescent Falls,

yet they had escaped for now. As they caught their breath outside The Silver Screen, the lights flickered back on inside, illuminating the chaos within. But for Charles, the demon from hell, his work was just beginning. The theater is in flames The flickering screen showed previews, but Charles didn't care. His eyes, cold and sharp, scanned the crowded movie theater. He was here to stop a film, a film that threatened to expose the truth about the disappearances plaguing the city. Beside him, a shadow seemed to writhe, taking the form of a massive wolf, its eyes glowing with malevolent intent. The air crackled with anticipation as the lights dimmed, but Charles had other plans.

He raised his hand, and the shadow wolf lunged. Chaos erupted. A man, oblivious to the impending horror, was suddenly thrown into a popcorn stand. The smell of buttered popcorn was replaced by the metallic tang of blood. People screamed, scrambling over seats, desperate to escape the unseen terror. The shadow wolf, almost invisible, moved with impossible speed, its claws tearing through flesh and bone. Panic consumed the theater. A woman, phone clutched in her hand, desperately tried to call for help. "We're at the Grandview Theater! There's a monster! Please hurry!" she screamed into the phone. The shadow wolf leaped over

the counter, a blur of darkness, and silenced her forever. Her screams were abruptly cut short, replaced by a sickening crunch. The projector sputtered, casting grotesque shadows on the screen as more people fell victim to the unseen predator. The air grew thick with the stench of fear and death. Those who could, fled towards the back exits, pushing and shoving, their only thought to escape the nightmare unfolding within the theater. As the first few made it out, a new horror greeted them. Flames licked at the building, the fire spreading with unnatural speed, fueled by the shadow wolf's

dark energy. The once grand movie theater was now a blazing inferno, a monument to Charles's twisted agenda. Sirens wailed in the distance, growing louder as police cars raced towards the scene. Officers spilled out, guns drawn, their faces grim as they surveyed the chaos. The theater was engulfed in flames, the screams of the dying echoing in the night. And standing calmly in front of the burning building, was an old black man with a dog. He looked harmless, even frail, but there was something unsettling about his eyes, something ancient and knowing. The dog, a large, shaggy mutt, stood silently beside him, its gaze fixed on the officers." Freeze! Police! Put your hands in the air!" the lead officer shouted, his voice strained. The old man didn't react. He simply smiled, a chilling, unsettling smile that sent shivers down the officer's spine. As the officers cautiously advanced, weapons raised, the old man and his dog began to fade, their forms flickering like a dying flame. Then, with a final, mocking smile, they vanished completely, leaving no trace behind. The police were stunned, their faces a mixture of disbelief and fear.

They had just witnessed something impossible, something that defied all logic and reason. The burning theater, the screams of the dying, the disappearing old man and his dog – it was all a waking nightmare. The investigation that followed was a mess. Witnesses gave conflicting accounts, some claiming to have seen a monster, others insisting it was a gas leak. The official report attributed the deaths to a combination of fire and mass hysteria, but the police knew better. They had seen the old man, they had felt the chilling presence of the shadow wolf. News of the disaster spread like wildfire, sparking fear and paranoia throughout the city. The disappearances, once a whispered rumor, were now the subject of intense scrutiny. People started locking their doors, avoiding dark alleys, and looking over their

shoulders, convinced that something sinister was lurking in the shadows. Meanwhile, Charles watched from afar, his eyes gleaming with satisfaction. The film would never be released, the truth would remain buried, and the city would continue to live in ignorance. The shadow wolf, its hunger sated, curled up at his feet, its eyes glowing with dark power. But somewhere, in the heart of the city, a seed of doubt had been planted. A few brave souls, haunted by the events at the Grandview Theater, refused to accept the official explanation. They knew that something evil had been unleashed, and they were determined to uncover the truth, no matter the cost. The hunt for Charles and his shadow wolf had begun, a dangerous game of cat and mouse that would determine the fate of the city. It had been months since Carlos's brother, Jason, had gone missing. The sun set over

Marina stood outside the supermarket, her arms filled with bags of groceries. The day was bright, and the air had a warm touch, but her mood was mixed. She had just finished a long shift at the hospital and only wanted to get home to her young son, Josiah.

As she walked through the parking lot, time seemed to stretch, and an uneasy feeling settled in her stomach. Suddenly, a strange noise caught her attention. It was a low growl, followed by a sound that was hard to identify. Marina turned her head and looked towards a dark blue sedan parked nearby. The driver’s door swung open, and out stepped a man who looked like he had come from a nightmare. With large black eyes, the man’s expression was vacant yet terrifying. His skin was pale, and foam bubbled at the corners of his mouth. Marina's heart raced as she took a few steps back. This wasn't just a weird guy; this was something much more dangerous. Something deeper than madness lurked in that stare." Run!" a voice shouted from the

distance. It was Jennifer, an old friend from the neighborhood. She was carrying two bags of chips and waved her arms wildly. "Get in your car, Marina! "Without thinking, Marina bolted towards her car, a small red hatchback parked a few spaces away. She could hear the frantic footsteps behind her, the growl changing to a full scream

as the possessed driver lunged forward. Each step felt heavy, her heart thumping loudly in her ears.She fumbled with the keys, her hands shaking as she tried to unlock the door. Finally, it clicked open. With one swift movement, she slid inside, locking the door just as the man reached the car. His fists pounded against the window, each strike echoing like a heavy drum. The terror in his eyes was undeniable, a mix of fury and something else, something she couldn't place. " Call the cops!" Jennifer yelled from a few feet away. She was trying to grab Marina's attention, her face a picture of panic. Marina quickly dialed 911, her voice shaky as she reported the strange man outside her car. "There's a crazy man in the parking lot! He's—he's…I don't know what he is!

Please hurry!" The operator assured her that help was on the way, but the moment felt endless. As she hung up, she glanced through the rearview mirror. Jennifer was still trying to get everyone in the parking lot to come inside, her arms waving in a desperate plea for safety. The strange man had now stopped banging on her window, but he seemed to sense something. He turned and took a few quick steps towards the gas station across the street. Marina's eyes widened as he bolted into the street, almost as if he was drawn to it. If the man was terrifying before, he was now a horror on the move. She watched in disbelief, forgetting her fear for a moment as he barreled straight towards the gas station. A few people were outside, unaware of what was coming. Without hesitation, the man rushed into the gas station.

Marina couldn't see what happened next, but she heard the screams echoing in the air. The sound was chilling, and a shudder ran down her spine. People began to run out of the station, some falling to the ground in confusion and fear. The chaos outside made her heart race again. Marina thought of Josiah, and her instincts kicked in. She had to help somehow. She opened her car door just a bit, trying to peak at the scene unfolding outside. As the man dashed into the station, two figures, a young mother and her child, stumbled back from the doors. The man's hands were clenched into fists, and then…then everything became a blur. Marina could hardly believe what she was seeing. Bodies seemed to vanish into thin air, people swallowed up by shadows that flickered around the gas

station ."Get to cover!" someone shouted as panic spread like wildfire. Marina could hear the cries, but she remained frozen in a mix of fear and disbelief. It was as if the

world had warped in that moment, leaving behind a reality filled with dread. With each second, the strange man became more destructive, throwing objects, upending the fuel pumps, and leaving chaos in his wake. But as quickly as it started, he stopped and turned, eyes locking on Marina's car. In that moment of connection, a wave of darkness washed over her, and she felt a chill run down her spine. “Help is coming!” the operator’s voice echoed in her mind. But what if help did not arrive in time? What if this creature was unstoppable? With her heart pounding, she realized fighting for her life meant stepping into the unknown. Marina took a deep breath, feeling the weight of her choice sit heavy in the air.

Should she run towards the danger or stay safe inside? But her son’s face flashed in her mind. He was at home, waiting for her. Gathering every ounce of courage, she turned the key in the ignition, ready to navigate the nightmare that lay both outside

and within. As the engine roared to life, she aimed her car towards the chaos, determined to confront the impossible and save not only herself but those who had fallen victim to this bizarre nightmare.The road ahead was shrouded in darkness, uncertainty, and hope. With her heart leading the way, she dashed towards the gas station and pushed against the limits of fear. Today was not about running away; today was about fighting back against whatever terrifying evil had taken over that man—and this town. THE club incident Once in a bustling city, as the sun dipped below the horizon, a strange and unsettling transformation took place. Regular people changed into something more sinister. Charles, a demon from a dark realm, had the power to turn ordinary humans into demonic ride buddy drivers. These drivers roamed the city at night, waiting for someone foolish enough to accept a ride. They came in every color and age, their faces twisted with a fearsome grin, eyes glowing in the dark. People had begun to tremble at the thought of walking alone at night.In this city lived a young woman named Mia. She was a college student who loved to spend her evenings out with friends. But lately, she felt an unease creeping into her heart. Whispers filled the air, stories of people who had taken rides and never returned. Though her friends warned her to be careful, Mia brushed off their concerns. She believed that nothing could happen to her. One night, Mia and her friends decided to visit a popular nightclub. The music pulsed through the air as they danced and laughed, but a chill still hung over them. They left the club late, around two in the morning. The streets were dark and quiet, a stark contrast to the lively

atmosphere they had just left behind. Mia's friends were too tired to walk and insisted on calling a ride. “Just a quick one,” they said, shivering with the cold. The thought of walking home

alone made them uneasy .Mia hesitated. “Are we sure? What if it’s one of those drivers?” she asked, recalling the stories she had heard. But her friends laughed it off; they were excited to go home quickly and get warm. They ordered a ride. Minutes later, a car pulled up, its engine growling like a beast. The driver wore a dark cap, casting shadows over his face. The friends exchanged nervous glances but climbed into the back seat, Mia squeezed in between two friends, feeling the warmth of their bodies but still anxious.“ Where to?” the driver’s voice was low, almost a growl. “Can you take us to Maple Avenue?” Mia said, trying to sound brave. The car began to move, slowly navigating through the dimly lit streets.As they drove, Mia looked out the window, her heart racing. Dark shapes moved in the shadows, and she felt eyes watching them. The driver glanced back at them, a grin spreading across his face, revealing sharp, yellow teeth. Fear gripped Mia’s chest. She felt a strange energy surrounding them. Suddenly, the car swerved, and they heard a loud thump.“What was that?” one of her friends gasped. The driver merely chuckled and didn’t answer.They finally reached a stoplight, and Mia’s heart sank. They were in a deserted area, far from the club. “Um, can we move a little faster? It’s getting late,” Mia said, trying to keep her voice steady.“Relax, it’s gonna be okay,” the driver replied, his grin widening. Mia could see that the driver’s eyes glowed softly in the dark, and a chill ran down her spine. She grabbed her phone, but it had no signal. Panic started to set in.

Suddenly, a commotion erupted nearby. A tall, muscular man appeared out of nowhere. He was dressed in a leather jacket, and by the look in his eyes, he seemed ready for a fight. “Hey! Pull over!” he shouted. The driver held his gaze, but fear flickered in his eyes. The pressure was growing. “Who are you?” the driver spat, his bravado fading.“I said pull over,” the man demanded,

moving closer. He leaned against the car, his fists clenched. Mia’s heart raced as her instincts told her to run. What was happening? She could feel danger closing in.

Then, in an unexpected move, the driver panicked. He stomped the gas pedal, ramming surreptitiously into the man's car parked nearby. The sound of metal crunching echoed through the night. “Get out of the car now!” the man roared, livid.In the next instant, the demon driver threw the car into reverse and lurched forward, sending Mia and her friends tumbling in the back seat. The angry man barely avoided being hit. In a flash, the driver leaped out, running into the shadows. “Go! Go! Go!” Mia yelled, her voice trembling. But they were stuck. The driver had left them in a parking lot, and they soon realized the other driver had vanished, seemingly swallowed by the darkness. Panic flooded the atmosphere. Mia and her friends climbed out of the car, desperate to escape, but the world around them felt impossibly strange. The lights from the nightclub faded into the distance,

transforming into distant stars. They were utterly alone. “We should find a taxi,” one of her friends suggested, but Mia knew no regular taxi would be around this late. As they turned to run back to the club, shadows loomed—others were here. Faces twisted and changed before her eyes, and she could see them lurking, their glowing eyes peering from dark corners. The night felt endless. Mia remembered the stories; those who had gone alone would sometimes just disappear, as if they had never been. The memories of them faded into the darkness, lost to the impenetrable night ruled by Charles' demonic creations.

Screams echoed in the distance, and Mia and her friends felt terror gripping their souls. If they didn’t escape now, they too

would vanish without a trace, another story to be spoken in hushed tones. With a burst of fearless adrenaline, they dashed into the night, hoping to outrun their fate, praying that the dawn would come before it was too late.

The news of the drivers

Carlos sat on his old sofa, calm and relaxed . The room was quiet as usual no brother to keep up the commotion or keep things lit, a they called it . Too quiet for comfort . His brother, Jason, was gone. He had been gone for a weeks and months .

Jason was taken to a bad place, a place no one knew about that’s if he wasn’t dead all together, Carlos could not tell the difference . Carlos felt a cold knot in his stomach every time he thought about it. How could people like Charles or other people walk the streets un-captured by law.The television screen flickered. A news anchor spoke in a serious voice. The headline read: Rise of the Strange Drivers. Carlos leaned closer. “I’m Dianne Foster and this is the Nightly news,”A woman with scared eyes was speaking on the screen she looked out of her mind. Carlos leaned in to get a better visual. She was talking about what happened at a nightclub, just two days ago. It was dark and loud. Then, a car crashed right through the crowd. She said shaking feverishly.

The driver was strange , zombie like and seemed unconscious.The woman trembled as she described him. His eyes were glowing yellow. Foam dripped from his mouth. He shouted one thing: “The change has come.” He said before speaking In strange demonic growling sounds.Carlos felt a chill run down his spine, not more paranormal clues. This sounded like something from a scary movie , not reality of the hood he had grown up in , not real life.The news reported more incidents

going back seven months . Violent drivers were appearing across the city, only at night and in private areas like driveways an personal properties . The strange thing was they only showed up when the moon was full and round in the sky. The news anchors called them Night Buddy Drivers.Carlos thought about Jason.

Could this be connected? Jason had been acting strange just before he vanished. He kept looking at the moon.The reporter showed a blurry picture of another car involved in a crash. It looked like a normal car, but the way it moved in the video clips seemed unnatural, too fast, too jerky. The truly odd things was when people were hit by night buddy drivers sometimes the body disappeared never found again, however the police department fought this idea to the end, arguing they were kidnapped by a second Car in mass kidnapping ring.Curiosity mixed with a growing fear in Carlos. He had to know more. If Jason was connected to these Night Buddy Drivers, maybe he was still alive somewhere.Suddenly, the lights in the apartment flickered and died. The TV went black. A loud, unnatural engine sound roared outside. It was close. Too close.Carlos crept to the window. The full moon hung huge and white in the sky. Outside, a car sped down the street. Its headlights were not normal beams; they

were a sickly yellow. He saw the driver turn toward his house. Even from here, Carlos thought he could see a strange glow coming from inside the car. The change has come, he thought, his heart pounding hard. He knew this was not just a news story anymore this was real and this voodoo thing Charles was doing to the city was just plain old real.

Roger and the devil himself

The air in the old church hung thick and heavy, not with incense or holiness, but with a silence so profound it pressed against Roger Brown's eardrums. Dust motes danced in the faint moonlight filtering through the stained-glass windows, illuminating rows of figures slumped in the pews. It was a grotesque parody of a funeral, but there was no casket, no eulogy, only this unnerving stillness. Roger, a seasoned investigator with eyes that had seen more than their fair share of the city's underbelly, felt a prickle of unease crawl up his spine.

He'd received an anonymous tip about a gathering here tonight, something about "Charles" and a ritual. The tipster had sounded terrified, bordering on hysterical. He gripped the Glock 19 holstered beneath his jacket, its familiar weight a small comfort in this unsettling scene. He moved slowly up the aisle, his footsteps muffled by the worn carpet. The faces he passed were blank, almost vacant. Men and women, young and old, all sat with their heads bowed, their bodies unnaturally still. They looked like wax figures, frozen in an eternal pose of mourning.

Or perhaps, he thought grimly, sleepwalking. He reached the altar. A lone figure sat facing the wall, his back to the congregation. It was Charles, the man mentioned in the tip. Even from behind, there was an aura of power radiating from him, a palpable sense of wrongness that made Roger's hand twitch towards his weapon . As he took another step, a voice sliced through the silence. "Leave now. "Roger turned to see a woman standing in one of the pews, her eyes fixed on him with an intensity that bordered on fanaticism. She was middle-aged, with a face etched with worry and a wildness in her gaze that suggested she was teetering on the edge of sanity." Who are you?" Roger asked, his voice low and cautious. "It doesn't matter," she

hissed. "What matters is you leave. You and the likes of you have no place here."" I'm just trying to understand what's going on,"

Roger replied, trying to keep his voice level. "People are worried ."The woman laughed, a short, harsh sound that echoed through the church. "Worried? They should be grateful. Charles

is going to make a needed change around this city. All the violence, the crime, the cop corruption, all of it will be purged." Purged how?" Roger pressed. "What is he planning? "He is going to cleanse our city of evil," she insisted. "Leave now you are the damn problem. You're part of the rot that's eating away at this city. You and everyone else who profits from the misery of others." Roger frowned. "I'm a cop. I'm here to protect people." The woman's eyes narrowed. "Protect? You protect the powerful.

You turn a blind eye to the crimes of the rich and influential. You arrest the small-time offenders while the real criminals walk free."He knew there was some truth to her words. The city was riddled with corruption, and he'd been forced to compromise his principles more than once. But he wasn't the enemy. Or was he?"Charles is going to make things right," the woman continued, her voice rising in fervor. "He's going to make this city a better place, even if it means..." She trailed off, her eyes darting nervously towards the figure at the altar." Even if it means what?" Roger prompted, stepping closer to her .Before she could answer, Charles stirred. He slowly turned around, and Roger felt a jolt of pure terror. It wasn't Charles. Not anymore. The man who faced him had Charles's face, but there was something else there, something ancient and malevolent that gleamed in his eyes. They were no longer human eyes. They were the eyes of a predator, cold and calculating. Roger recognized him. He'd seen the reports, heard the CARLOS BURNS THE TREES – The air in the old church hung thick and heavy, not with incense or

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woman gasped, taking a step back. Even she seemed frightened by the transformation."What have you done to Charles?" Roger demanded, his hand tightening on his weapon.The demon chuckled, a sound that sent shivers down Roger's spine. "Charles is merely a vessel. A means to an end. He offered me his body, his soul, in exchange for power. And now, I will use that power to cleanse this city.""You're insane," Roger said, trying to maintain his composure."Insane?" the demon snarled. "I am merely bringing order to chaos. These people," he gestured to the congregation with a dismissive wave, "they are lost. They are broken. They need a shepherd, a leader. And I will be that leader.""By kidnapping them and turning them into mindless drones?" Roger challenged."They are willing participants," the demon insisted. "They crave purpose, direction. I am simply giving them what they desire."Roger knew he had to stop him. He had to protect these people, even if they didn't want to be protected. He raised his Glock, aiming it at the demon's heart."This ends now," Roger said, his voice firm despite the fear that gnawed at him.The demon smiled, a cruel, predatory smile that promised pain and suffering. "Do you really think a mere mortal weapon can harm me?"Roger pulled the trigger. The church exploded in a cacophony of gunfire and screams. The battle for the soul of the city had begun.

The escape attempt

Finally, the time of the purple moon had come, slowly but it came . They began to pack weapons food and maps into their backpacks it seemed like a lot of work and fear was the main feeling. It was crazy they were walking in a nightmare world and it all happened so fast. They put on the primitive dog skin vest that she had made and all kneeled together to pray in the center of the room. “lord help us on this journey, keep us safe from the evil that lurks in the shadows and watch us so that we may one day find our way home, thankyou amen.” the group got off on the floor and looked at each other. “Is everyone ready? Wendy said” they all nodded quietly and began to walk up the stairs. The flung open the trap door release the cool night air inside. Leaves blew across their face as each individual climbed out of the hole to the surface. It was peaceful serene night actually beautiful. They knew the hounds were sleep so there was less fear naturally.

They began to walk with one guy in front one guy in the back of the group. It wasn’t long before they couldn’t see the post anymore. Latrice held the map and compass firmly in hand and navigated while the guys kept watch around them. She had strapped baby Monty to her back in a protective case like she had done many times, before fighting to survive.

The house of Dr. Stone

Traveling seemed like the only option a dangerous one but a real one. The guys could not fathom sitting still in a dark dingy room sharing stories for eternity. It just wasn’t the way to go out. They

figured they would escape or die trying to. The walking seemed to last forever and

with each turn, they heard strange noises that reminded them that this was not a normal place. Moaning and groaning and all sorts of strange sounds echoed out from the background of the trees. Often they would see strange shadows moving up ahead but never bothered to run it was the hounds that were the biggest threat. After hours of walking Jason saw something. “what on earth is that?” “what?” Latrice said taking out stick from her back pack. “ I see lights ” “lights of what fool” “lights what do you mean you see lights? said Wendy. He began to move towards the light that shined through bushes, “is it a fire” “no it looks like light bulb light” “how that is not possible?

Latrice responded there is no real electricity here. Jason pulled back branches and revealed what looked like a fence with porch lights shining through. They all looked exited and confused. “how in the world is this possible ?” Latrice asked. “have we walked out of the woods?” I doubt it. They all looked up what looked like a large brick house hidden plane sight. It was guarded by a large fence covered in leaves and branches and a dimly lit porch light. Looked to even be a camera on the door! At the top of the fence was barbed wire and a sign that said keep out this is not a safety post. The door slowly opened to a dark home and from the shadows a small woman walked forward. She was small older black woman about 5 foot five in height, short bob cut hair and she wore army fatigues.

“may I help you” she said in a calm voice tilting her glasses forward. They could see clearly she was holding a shot gun in her left hand. “we don’t mean to bother you, but how, or never mind, are we close to the safety post? Latrice asked.

“Oh that’s what you’re looking for? The woman responded. I think I could help you with that she said before smiling. She pressed a button on the side of the door and the gate opened electronically. “come on in, its not often I have normal guest.” They all looked at each other in confusion and eventually gave in to impulse they could not resist the face that she had electricity in this dark desolate place. They slowly moved forward and walked into dr. stones brick fortress one by one not knowing what to expect. They were inside, the house was lit up with electricity it was the greatest shock. They walked behind her silently. “sit down all of you I love guest, at least the normal ones that is.”

They all gathered around on the dining room table. The house was well decorated which added even more the mystery. It was strange enough to suddenly be in hell, but even stranger to find normal house sitting right in the middle of it. “let me introduce myself, I am Dr. Janice Stone, they call me Dr. stone for short, or at least they used to back when I was a normal person, and I have been here for 23 years.” “damn” Jason replied shaking his head. “I know you are wondering how? With the lights huh?” well it’s a long story but back before Charles took me, I was a engineering professor, she said with a sad face before drinking a sip of water. After being here for years I have learned that there is a energy here than can be used for power and I learned to use it. Me and my husband George over here mastered it years ago. They all turned and looked at the large husky man sitting in the corner waving. They all waved back oddly. He was quiet and never said a word. They woman seemed strange and they were hesitant she gave off some really strange vibes to say the least, especially with the rifle. “are you hungry?” “hell yeah” Jason responded. Dr.

Stone ordered George to go into the kitchen to prepare them some food, he did so quietly almost as if he was her servant which slowly added to the speculation surrounding her already. George was large and scary looking everything from his face to his body screamed danger. After just few minutes George returned with a serving plate full of tea and some really good smelling soup that he passed around the table. Her table was well decorated with large gold candle sticks in the middle of it.

They all began to eat and drink without hesitation, however they did feel guilty trusting her so fast given they had just met this mysterious older woman. Latrice had met a lot of the people who stayed in the woods with the hounds but she had never seen this woman before which made her nervous. “This soup is damn good, what on earth is in this?” Jason asked. “thank you young man, but an old gal like me will never give away my secret recipe, just use your imagination, you have to get creative out here to even survive honey” “well whatever it is, its dope.” The sound of spoons and glasses resonated through the room as they ate silently and slowly

asked questions. “So how did he get you? You seem pretty smart ?” “well apparently not smart enough to not get trapped’ she said before chuckling and sipping some tea. “I’m not one for long stories so I’m going to make it simple, Charles pretended to be a new professor at my university, on his first day he invited me his trunk to remove some materials and he pushed me in and locked the trunk she said before laughing and I have been missing in action ever since, like I said it was twenty three years ago I barely remember baby. Dr. stone looked to be almost eighty years old, and her husband judge looked to be even older. “let me show you guys something!” she said before smiling oddly” they were beginning to get worried but only Latrice

thought the woman had gone insane from being here so many years. She scurried towards a shelf on the wall and grabbed a remote control. She pointed across the table at a T.v set hanging from the ceiling. Surprisingly it clicked on, she flipped to the news, “what in the ?” Latrice said with her hand on her mouth. She was utterly shocked, cable t.v? she was now astonished at dr. stones intelligence, but now a little afraid in a way. She turned up the volume, the news anchor was talking about two young men being missing from the local area, they quickly displayed pictures of Jason and Terrell on the screen. “dog, that’s us?” Jason said astonished. “you see, you all we are in another dimension a dark dimension, but I have proven we still are in this world at least on some fundamental level, crazy as it seems you can still get T.v and cable signals here, which means we are not totally gone from the natural world, were just trapped in a way.” Latrice’s eyes filled with tears, the possibility of returning home one day became even more real. Dr. Stone continued to explain, you see I have found the edge of the woods but I couldn’t get out, it’s some type of evil force field that brings the lost back to where they started. The demon that brought you here, Charles is a chief demon, a shapeshifter from the thirteenth level of hell he may be the reason this place exist but no one knows for sure.” “Enough talk do you all want to spend the night, I have plenty of room for guest.” They all looked at each other and simultaneously nodded.

Dr. Stone and Jason

It was a dark and stormy night when the group found themselves seeking shelter in the home of Dr. Stone and her husband George as strange menacing looking man. The couple had had an ominous presence even though they were old, but with no other options were there for the tired group of four , they had reluctantly accepted their offer of a place to stay for the night, but on some level she was friendly or at least talkative and explained alot. As the group settled in the guest room, they found themselves feeling an eerie sense of unease. Dr. Stone was a small woman with piercing eyes and a serious demeanor, while George was even stranger, with a wild look in his eyes and a tendency to mutter to himself in a language no one could understand. But despite their oddities, the group was grateful for a roof over their heads, and soon drifted off to sleep. It was in the dead of night when Jason, one of the group members, awoke with the urge to use the bathroom. Quietly slipping out of the guest room, he made his way down the dimly lit hallway to the bathroom. After finishing his business, he felt a pang of hunger and decided to sneak into the kitchen for a late-night snack. As he crept into the kitchen, he was startled to find Dr. Stone waiting for him. She was standing in the shadows, her expression unreadable as she beckoned him closer. Jason felt a chill run down his spine as he realized that something was off about the woman. She began to speak in a low, melodic voice, telling him about the loneliness she had experienced in this strange place known as Voodalla, the evil dimension. Dr. Stone's words sent a shiver down Jason's spine as she moved closer to him, her eyes gleaming with an intensity that made him feel

uncomfortable. She began to ask him personal questions, probing into his relationship status and commenting on his looks in a way that made him uneasy.” You are some handsome, you know I have a thing for young men like your self.” “is that girl there Wendy your lady?” “oh, I’m good I rather not, he responded quickly “yes, yes that’s my girl.” Sensing danger, Jason tried to edge away from her, but she suddenly reached out to the wall and caressed a gun that was mounted there. “you know I don’t have to play fair if I don’t want to you know” “yea I know he said.” She

gradually let him walk away into the night staring darkly at him as he walked away.

Later that night, Wendy's stomach seemed to be getting upset.

She couldn't sleep well maybe it was the soup. All night she tossed and turned. She finally decided to get up and walked to the bathroom to puke. She walked up the long cold hallway of the house and pulled on the bathroom door only to stop suddenly. The smell of rot struck her nose in the oddest of way. It felt like it was coming from behind her. She turned at saw a door with a light coming from underneath it. She turned and pulled the door open curiously. As she opened it, the smell grew stronger and stronger and then finally she saw a black curtain.

She pulled the black shower like curtain open and saw a hideous and unwanted surprise. Two corpses hang from the ceiling skinned of their meat. A chart next to the bodies planned out soup meals for the next two months. She knew the bodies were human. She grabbed her mouth to avoid screaming and turned and slowly shut the door. She quietly tiptoed her way back to the room. She awoke Latrice and the guys from their sleep. "wake up, she said crying wake the fuck up! She said trying to whisper." "what girl, we don't have time for foolishness what's the

problem?" "you know the soup we ate?" "yeah I know the soup, why" "it's people soup" she said before clearing her throat. "Dr. Stone is a cannibal" "a what?" "it does make sense, how her and George are able to hunt out here they are almost ninety years old, oh my god we have to go." The guys were already awake and listening. Wendy led them to the door where she kept her meat and they all saw for themselves. That night they broke the lock on the front door and hacked opened the fence using an axe.

They took one short look back the beautiful house, which for one night at least seemed like heaven and ran for their lives.

OMAR SIMMONS

Latrice shivered. The air in the strange house was thick and smelled like old spices and damp earth. Beside her, Wendy clutched Jason's arm tight. Terrell stood a little apart, his eyes scanning the shadowy corners of the room, this plazy was crazy well decorated and designed . They were trapped. They knew it in their bones, if dr. stone wanted too.

They were in Voodalla, the Evil Voodoo spirti prison . It was a place whispered about in hushed tones, ae place no one willingly entered and most black people did not even believe in, it was a legend of misty falls . Now, they were deep inside it, standing in the living room of a woman named Dr. Stone.

Dr. Stone was a strange woman. Her eyes were too bright, and her smile didn't quite reach them. She sat in a high-backed wooden chair, looking more like a queen on a strange throne

than a homeowner. The military attire was the real question.

"Welcome," she said, her voice surprisingly calm, I bet you young folk are tired honey, I know I am . "I know you are confused.

This place… this is not an ordinary house. It is not exactly in hell, but it is close."

Latrice found her voice first. "Close to hell? What are you talking about? How do we get out of this forest?" I mean voodalla is a holding place for evil spirits who want to return earth, I mean that's what i was told for years.

Dr. Stone leaned forward. "Getting out is not easy, dear. Part of what you said is true and false sugar. Voodalla is a place where reality twists. This facility, this whole area, was once a secret place. A voodoo experiment facility."

Jason frowned. He was usually the practical one. “Experiment facility? By who?” “ I dont need more stories, man I can barely accept Charles exist”

“By people who thought they could control what should not be controlled,” Dr. Stone replied, her gaze distant. “The workers, mostly, were ex-inmates. Desperate people looking for a second chance, led down a darker path.”

Wendy whimpered softly. “Voodoo? We saw things in the trees. Dark shapes.” “we been here for years tell me you know the way out” she said hopeful and afraid.

“Ah, yes. The results of the experiments,” Dr. Stone sighed, as if

discussing bad weather. “The facility was shut down a long time ago. It shut down because they made a terrible mistake. They let something out.”

Terrell finally spoke, his tone serious. “We were brought here by something. A demon. It called itself Charles.”

Dr. Stone’s eyes widened slightly, a flicker of real fear crossing her face. “Charles. Yes. He was the first. The first successful, and disastrous, experiment.”

She stood up, moving to a dark shelf filled with strange jars and dried roots. “Charles was supposed to be a controlled entity. A source of power. But the inmates, they were arrogant. They pushed the boundaries of what Dr. Omar Simmons designed.”

“Dr. Simmons?” Latrice asked, curiosity overriding her fear for a moment.

“The lead scientist. Brilliant, but blinded by ambition. He created the cage. A very special cage called ‘The Simulator.’ It was designed to trap even the strongest of demons, to study them safely.”

“And Charles got out?” Jason pressed.

“He did more than get out,” Dr. Stone said, turning back to face them. The shadows made her look menacing. “Charles was the key that unlocked everything else. The inmates tried to bind him inside The Simulator, thinking they had him cornered. But he broke the control matrix. When he escaped, the facility panicked.

The very air of Voodalla changed because of that massive surge of dark energy.”

The realization hit Latrice with a cold wave. They weren’t just lost in a scary forest; they were in the ruins of a failed occult prison.

“So, Charles is loose because of a failed experiment?” Terrell summarized.

“Precisely,” Dr. Stone confirmed. “And Charles remembers everything. He remembers the scientists who tried to contain him. He remembers the fear. He has a fondness for collecting things that remind him of his capture. Like you four.”

The climax began to build. A low, guttural scraping sound echoed from somewhere outside the house, right near the thick wooden door. It sounded like heavy claws dragging on stone.

Wendy gasped and hid behind Jason completely. “What was that?”

Dr. Stone’s calm finally cracked. Her hands shook as she pointed toward a heavy iron bolt on the door. “That is Charles. He must have followed your energy signature here. He knows I have information about The Simulator.”

“You know how to stop him?” Latrice pleaded.

“I know how the facility was laid out. The Simulator isn’t gone. It was designed to self-seal in case of total breach. It’s still here,

hidden beneath this house, powered by emergency generators the inmates set up.” Dr. Stone looked at them desperately. “If you can get inside The Simulator, you might be able to lure Charles in long enough for the system to reboot and trap him again. But you have to be fast. He doesn’t like the cage.”

The scraping sound came again, louder this time, followed by a heavy thud against the wood. The door shuddered.

“The entrance is through the cellar hatch,” Dr. Stone urged, pushing a heavy rug aside to reveal a dark wooden trapdoor. “I can slow him down for a minute, maybe two. But you must hurry. If Charles gets me, he gets whatever knowledge I have about the controls.”

Jason grabbed the handle of the trapdoor. Fear was still there, but the need to survive burned brighter. “Let’s go. Latrice, Wendy, Terrell. Stick close. We are going cage hunting after we leave this ratched place .”

(the asylum operation v?)

Latrice, Wendy, Jason, and Terrell walked deeper into the dark mist of miserable dead woods. The air felt thick and cold. They were lost in Voodalla, the land of

voodoo ghosts, pyschos racist and guilty people . Strange shadows danced between the tall, twisted trees. Every snap of a twig made them jump.

"I wish we had never taken that shortcut," Wendy whispered. Her voice trembled.

Jason, usually the brave one, kept looking behind them. "Me too. This place feels wrong."

Terrell gripped a thick branch he was using as a walking stick. "Keep moving. Staying still is worse."

Latrice, though scared, tried to stay focused. "We need a landmark. Something tall to see over these trees."

Just then, through a break in the dense leaves, they saw it. A tower. It rose high above the forest, black against the dim, cloudy sky. It looked old, like a giant broken tooth. It didn't look like a friendly place. It looked like an evil facility from a nightmare. A small tower with two adjacent shorter buidlings. it must have been that place that dr stone mentioned.

"There!" Latrice pointed. "Maybe someone is there. Or maybe we can see where we are from the top."

Curiosity, stronger than their fear, pulled them towards the tower. As they got closer, they saw broken windows and crumbling stone. The entrance was a huge, heavy wooden door, slightly ajar, hanging loose on one rusty hinge. A foul, musty smell drifted out. ‘maybe we find weapons, or the cage that the lady mentioned” “it’s worth a try” “who doesn't like this idea?” she said before turning around and offered resistance. “ they all agreed.

"This is where they filmed horror movies," Jason muttered, wiping sweat from his forehead. A bad joke nobody wanted.

Terrell pushed the door open fully. It made a long, grating sound that echoed in the silence. They stepped inside. The inside was even darker than the forest. Dust lay everywhere, thick like gray snow. They used their phone flashlights to see.

They found a wide, winding staircase made of stone. The steps groaned under their weight. They climbed slowly, careful not to make too much noise, though it felt like the whole tower was empty anyway.

After what felt like many flights, they reached a landing. A single, wide door stood before them. It was made of thick metal, pitted with rust.

"This must be important," Latrice said, pushing the door. It opened into a large room. Their flashlights swept across the space, revealing a shocking scene.

This was an old laboratory. Long metal tables were covered in strange, dried stains. In one corner, there were several tall, rusty cages. They looked like they were built to hold something very large and very angry.

Wendy gasped and covered her mouth. "What is this place?" “stone was right” Latrice wispered.

Jason moved his light over a dusty corkboard on the wall. Pinned

to it were old, faded photographs. They were black and white, showing creatures that made their stomachs turn. One looked like a snarling dog with too many teeth—a hell hound, perhaps. Others showed shadowy figures with horns and glowing eyes—

demons.

"This was a research facility," Terrell whispered, his voice tight. "A place that studied… monsters." “the same ones that are holding us hostage.

The air in the lab felt heavy with bad memories. The team did not need to discuss it. They needed to leave. Fast.

"Back to the stairs. Now," Latrice ordered.

They turned quickly, moving towards the doorway. But before they could take three steps, a sound came from the hallway they had just walked through. It was a wet, dragging sound, like heavy cloth scraping on stone.

The phone lights swung toward the sound. Standing in the doorway, blocking their exit, was a man. He was pale, his skin grayish and stretched tight over his bones. A dead black man ball headed wearing a lab uniform his eyes black ,He wore a stained, ripped cream colored lab uniform with a strange v like symbol . His eyes were dull white, and a thin line of dark fluid dripped from his slack mouth. He was a zombie ghost or a demon?, a remnant of whatever experiments happened here. He was the proof of government guilt, and secret operation that let Charles and the dogs go? the place existed in another dimension and so did the lab? but how , the assumption was that after the demons

ran free the forest and its trees became more powerful , so powerful that that place was un-seeable to human eyes.

The zombie moved with a jerky, unnatural motion, its arms hanging low, ready to grab. He was big.

"Run!" Terrell yelled, pushing Wendy behind him.

Jason fumbled with his phone, trying to get a better light, but the black zombie was already lunging. It moved surprisingly fast for something so dead.

Latrice screamed as the zombie shuffled past Terrell and made a grab for her. She ducked just in time. The creature's cold, stiff fingers scraped the air where her shoulder had been.

"The cages!" Jason shouted, pointing to the far side of the lab, away from the only exit. "We can try to trap it!"

It was a desperate plan, but they had no choice. Terrell grabbed a heavy metal stool from a table and threw it hard at the zombie's head. It made a dull thud, slowing the creature down for a second, but the zombie didn't even flinch.

Wendy and Latrice bolted towards the largest cage, pulling at the rusty latch. It was stiff and refused to budge.

The zombie focused on Terrell, the one who had attacked it. It took another slow, determined step forward, its breath rattling in its chest.

"Hurry!" Terrell backed away, keeping the stool between himself and the monster, knowing it wouldn't stop until it tore them apart. The climax had arrived in the silent, dusty prison of the old evil tower. In fit of desperation latrice pulle dout a can of bear spray, she had saved for the big guys , while emaceated they all hurried down the stairs through the door. wendy fell and sprung her ankle, terrell helped her up and they continued to run, run run.

Back on the Trail

Wendy reached into her bag and pulled out some sandwiches that she made for everyone. “hungry she asked?” “hell yeah” Jason said with a desperate look in his eyes, he was wondering when someone was going to mention food. They all barely recovered from almost being lunch to two senior citizens. The fish itself came from one of the few, none poisonous rivers in the forest. They all ate as they walked never stopping not once. They kept walking and walking the quietness became scary after a while. Suddenly they began to hear a noise. It was a weird grinding breathing sound. They looked down a hill to the right it was a pack of hounds sleep in a huddle they were sound asleep.

“Keep quiet” Wendy said make as little noise as possible you don’t want to wake them, they can wake early you know” The group tiptoed down the hill weapons pointed firmly ahead of them not making a single noise. After a while the beast were no longer in sight. They continued food step after foot step four hours had passed. They finally came to a small pond. The pond was gleaming in the moon. They walked to the mouth of the pond to take a really short break. The hounds can’t smell that well near water according what Mary had taught them. As they approached the small elegant pond something seemed to float near them it wasn’t long before they noticed it was a body. It looked to be the body of a guy he looked freshly killed. His head was bitten off and bite marks covered his young body he looked to be only about sixteen or seventeen. It looked like he had just arrived right before the purple moon. Wendy grabbed her mouth and gasped. Jason held her in his arms. It was a

horrible sight to see. Most of the victims of this dark dimension were young and their lives had just gotten started. Jason started to think about all the missing people reports that had accumulated around the city of Atlanta in the past 5 years it started to make sense. They decided that the short break was over and began to walk again.

The map had indicated that they were half way to the village and that they need to keep traveling east in a straight line.

Leaves and branches crunched loudly under their feet as they walked. Fall winds blew wildly across their clothing and skin. The night time air began to get chilly and so they added layers to their clothing. It was a desolate and scary walk. Every foot step felt like they were closer to death. They even walked passed a few wolf dens. Countless bodies and skeletons covered the dark forest. Ravens sat in the trees motionless staring down at them.

Animals in the forest seemed normal in contrast to everything else that was present. They often saw deer scampering for their lives through the forest. They never even turned their heads to look while running. After walking for a while, suddenly a strange figure appeared in the road ahead waving his hands desperately. The group stopped and looked at each other.

“Who is that?” Wendy said to Latrice. “I don’t know, don’t trust it” said Latrice it could be a forest demon, they don’t always slumber.” They walked forward cautiously, weapons raised in front of them ready to strike. “Who are you?” they all asked in unison? A young guy walked forward covered in sweat and tears, “you got to help me I’m lost, I don’t know where I am, I don’t have a phone. Some sick old man pervert psychopath hand cuffed me and dropped me off here. I was sleep outside on a bench, I am homeless I never bother anybody I mind my own business I been on the street a while I just got out of jail, He approached me and offered me a warm meal best meal I had eaten in a while I will say that much. After feeding me, he attacked me with a gun and put handcuffs on me I thought he was undercover cop or parole officer or something, but that wasn’t the case. He drove me all the way here and dropped me off. The crazy thing was, when he got back in the car I could see a

long black tail coming from the bottom of his trench coat. I could also see two small horns on the side of his head. He mumbled something about some dogs and lunch time.” the guy seemed like the typical abductee to the group, so they let down their weapons and began to relax slowly.

“Thank you he said I’m just like you guys” where are we going do you know a way out of here. I been here for hours in my first

hour I witnessed the first guy I met, get mauled to death by some type of mutant wolf. Two wolves held the guy’s legs while the big one pulled his head off ugliest thing I have ever witnessed I’m talking Stephen King like creepy.” I hid like a coward in some bushes but it was all I could do. The guy looked young, he couldn’t have been day past seventeen years old.”

“We know all too well,” Latrice said. “But we don’t have time to discuss it we have to continue to walk, the clock is ticking us only have 3 hours left before the blood moon and the dogs wake up.” They guy quickly conceded and began to follow behind them, Wendy offered him some food and tea, he did not reject it, he looked famished. All five people began to power walk down the dark trail full of large oak pine trees. Fear seem to increase with passing of the time the map indicated that they only had one mile to go. Jason held the lantern higher the later the night got, just in case the blood moon came. Another half of mile had been covered but they only had one hour left. They were dangerously close to the end of the cycle and they were moving to slow. The new guy had slowed them down. They were so close they could even see the light from the camp and the village wall they had built to keep out the demons. They were close but to their horror the purple moon was slowly turning red and they could hear blood curdling howling in the distance. “Oh No,” Latrice said they are getting up early!!!!” They began to hear footsteps circling them in the darkness. The group formed a circle. “Don’t panic she said we just have to fight long enough to make it to the city gates when they see us they will help us.

Out of nowhere a large hound leaps feet and claws crashing into the leaves from the

bushes. He put his head down and snarled

eyes red like hades. He lunged at the new guy grabbing him by the leg gripping his left leg in his mouth. Once clinching down on him savagely, he attempted to drag him away slowly. The group began stabbing at the animal but it didn't seem to work. His hide was thick and black touch like elephant skin. They noticed the white stripe down the back of the beast. "It's an alpha!" Wendy said this won't be easy. The beast feverishly shook the leg of new guy Patrick in his mouth. While they all looked along and screamed at this roller coaster ride of horror. Blood covered the leaves below squinting in random directions. The beastly hound began to drag the unsuspecting victim in the bushes. They pulled on Patrick with everything that they had in them, but the muscular monster was unbelievably strong.

Latrice could not stand to see him die like so many others but she was afraid herself, so she took out a katana sword out her back pack and she ran at him like a true savage warrior. She ran in a u pattern to position herself behind the distracted animal. She ran forwarded eyes close as she feared, if he turned around she two would become lunch and a member of the hell fire club, Regardless of fear she ran full speed and In one dynamic baseball slide she managed to strike the brooding beast right across the eyes in one fast slash almost missing the tip of the sword still managed to cut the animal. The beast began to whimper in pain. She sprained her wrist in the attempt and eventually lost the sword in the leaves. He released the victim but it was obvious he didn't want to. His leg was bloody and torn ragged a horrid site. He screamed in agony. Jason grabbed him and begin to hold him but you could see in his eyes he was gone.

The giant dog retreated to the bushes leaving a trail of blood the entire way grunting and whimpering. Wendy began to wrap the leg of the guy with some spare materials she had in her pack.

"what is your name, by the way" "Patrick Ross, he said in agony." they helped Patrick to his feet and put his arm around his shoulders and continued to help him limp towards the village it was getting closer and closer.

The group had made only about 200 feet before they heard the howling again only the calls became shorter and more aggressive. Chills ran down their spine. After watching what just happen to Patrick, they realized how serious an Alpha hound was. The stabbing and clubbing didn't seem to do much of anything, it was too strong and relentless and the skin was really thick. A black figure appeared in front of them from the shadows once more, it was another dog. It slowly sprawled into view of the reddening moon. His eyes were like hell fire you could see the slash fresh across his eyes. It was the same Alpha hound she had wounded, he was back and angrier than before. He reared on his hind legs and darted forward throwing his entire body mass onto the group. The group all fell to the ground instantly from the massive body of the monster. He grabbed the arm of Patrick and in two hard tugs with its massive jaws, pulled it from the socket freeing it from the body! He then, opened his jaws wide exposing larger dagger like teeth, drool and blood poured everywhere, he grabbed Patrick's head and began to shake it until he no longer moved.

Wendy screamed in fear. The whole group stared in shock, as chilled ran down their spines, they knew that these were murderous animals but they rarely witnessed the kills. They quickly began to reach for their weapons. Terrell approached the monstrous canine from behind a plunged another dagger in to the back of its shoulder. He struck him several times with a

vengeance, "that's for killing PAT he screamed." The element of surprise was their greatest hope. The others in the group began to stab at the body of the beast. The fur was thick and smelled like rotted meat from dead bodies. The beast howled in agony and he slowly stopped moving. He eventually just dropped right on top of Patrick. Jason held on to Patrick desperately trying to bring him back him but it has in inevitable. Screaming out for someone to help there was nothing that could be done in the time that remained. Remains were scattered everywhere. Why did he want him so bad? They were forced to consider the idea that maybe all of them were not innocent regardless of how it may have seemed. Maybe Patrick was hiding something, maybe he truly was evil and they could smell him. Patrick was gone they

had to keep moving. In tears and exhausted the crew began running towards the entrance to the village the moon was almost totally red. In the rear they could see at least five hounds making their way down the hill one was carrying Patrick's leg in his mouth it was a horrible sight.

Finally they were only a few feet away from the main gate of the village lit by torches. The gate open and five armed men ran out to escort them inside in a hurry. The doors slammed behind them they could hear the monstrous growling of the dogs on the other side. The girls just kept crying uncontrollably and the guys just stood there in shock speechless faces expressionless.

"Welcome" a man said from a distance. As strange small man rolled forward in a wheel chair. "I am the ambassador" "I have seen you girls before but you two young men are new to me, introduce yourself ""I am Terrell and this is my friend Jason we were just captured recently ""I see you made it to one of our

many safety outposts. Latrice and Wendy are two fine warriors; we know them well. "The two young men looked around the village it was surprisingly well built. It was full of shops houses and markets lanterns hanged everywhere do to the lack of electricity. A giant stone circular walls about 200 feet high surrounded the entire settlement. It was full of people many young and old, many ethnicities. They didn't look happy but they didn't look entirely sad either.

Take a tour of the village the man said. We have our own markets and wells. Most of the lakes in the forest are full of arsenic you know. And there are many poisonous plants as well, what more could you expect from being in purgatory. "I want to know the best way to kill the right Alfa hell hound to go home and hopefully take Latrice and Wendy with us." the two girls looked hopelessly flattered. "There is a man that can help you with that, he knows everything about the dogs. He will answer any question you want for a small fee." so Ezekiel the wheel chair man took them to the village priest. He dropped at his doorstep. "Have fun" he said, then he rolled away to the banquet hall for the nightly Festivities.

They walked into his mysterious hut. Strange bones and shells hang from the ceiling. A large muscular man sat in the corner, who looked more like a voodoo man than a priest, sat peacefully in Indian style. “What you got for me?” he said. Wendy answered happily “we bring weapons, food and medicine. “She gently, laid all the tokens in front of him. The people in the annex or stone city, still had a trade system and economy and it was a pleasant surprise to the group. “That is fine” he said what do you want to know? “I want to know; how do you find the main wolf who has

the key in his belly? And how to kill him, you have to help me I’m a regular dude. I don’t belong here I just want to go home and if I can bring Wendy and Latrice home to their families as well, that would be great.”

“Well young man, there are many wolves who have the key, however they are not Alfas they are called gatekeepers a lot of new entries get them confused. They have a different stripes on their backs. It’s more of a yellow color. They are just as nasty and can be killed the same as the other dogs. However, watch out.

These demonic hounds possess a poisonous bite and they can manipulate their energy to shape shift, very few warriors have beat them. But I can tell you there is hope, some have escaped by killing them.” “If you want I can give you a special bottle of aroma that can attract one of them and that will give you a chance to slay one of them. ”Please do Terrell said I will be eternally grateful? “The man reached into a cabinet full of bottles and grabbed a small container that said “dog scent”.

Terrell quickly put it in his back pack. “Well that’s it the man said that’s all you paid for ““No thank you” Jason said. “That was enough.” They all quickly exited the man’s hut. They would have to spend the night in the village for a week to wait out the blood moon. A village ambassador led the four visitors to an empty hut that they kept for travelers. All night music from people dancing and drinking kept them up. Jason just kept staring at the wall.

What happened to Patrick scarred him mentally he was not the same. He remained quiet for the rest of the night. It was not by choice he was traumatized. Terrell had a different reaction he spent the rest of the night sharpening his weapons with a stone

and making battle maps. Some people in the village celebrated drank and played cards all night while others seemed to be

genuinely depressed they made no facial expressions. They never spoke and just seemed lifeless. They were not all having the same reaction to being stranded in this dark realm.

Wendy spent her time gathering old foods and throw away items people no longer wanted to take back to the hut just in case they didn't escape. She also gathered soaps, rags medicine and seeds. In the latest hours Latrice and Wendy sat in a corner staring out at the partying people. A Large heavy set woman approached the two of them, "hey there, I don't mean to be a bother, but I used to be a hairdresser before I came here, I was wondering if I could fix your hair up for you sweeties no cost, just love of the art of the trade." "Yea why not, Latrice said." The woman introduce her-self as kalisha. Kalisha grabbed a chair as Latrice sat in Indian style while the woman undid her braids."

Kalisha the wife?

"So, if you don't mind, Wendy asked, how did you get here?" "Child it's a long story, but I'm willing to tell it she said laughing." "So, one day I was at a bar, I Loved bars honey, all of the bartenders around the city knew me by name, they even nicknamed me tipsy. I was sitting at the bar when I was 32 I'm now 44, might I add, and this old man walked in. He sat down next to me and offered to buy me a drink, now, I normally don't

date older guys but he was dressed well and he smelled good and he was kind of charming. We talked for hours and honestly I thought I was in love with him, or just drunk. Anyway, he offered to marry me and I said yes, looking back, I should have said no.” he drove me to a chapel outside the city and we got married.

Later on that night I lay on the bed waiting for my new husband to come out of the shower, and I fell asleep, when I awoke I was being pushed out the backseat of a car on a dirt road, duct-taped drunk and scared out of this world. There I was walking up a cold dark road until group of people carrying arrows led me here, in never saw the animals until years later.

“Wow, that’s crazy.” Funny but crazy. “Yes girl, I tried to marry a demon, and that’s how I got here.” After an hour Latrice’s hair was done and they thanked kalisha. “Anytime you need your hair did while in the city give me a holler. They promised they would. In the center of the room someone rolled in a cage. “What are they doing?” Jason asked. In the center of the room was a large cage with a hound inside. “A tall man leaned over and filled them in. “they are going to do the same thing to him, that they do to us..... lunch.” “They are preparing him to be cooked, you see

young man, every now and then we do catch one of them alone, then it’s time for revenge, or supper however which way you want to look at it.” They are not poisonous if you cook them the right way.” Jason was not amused at the idea of eating wolf steaks, so he declined to ask any more questions. In the corner he saw a woman holding a young boy, it looked as if they were new entries still trying to get used to the ridiculous new reality of being trapped in another dimension.

A mother and her son

In the depths of Hell, there was a city made entirely of stone, they were now in it meeting it’s occupants, many who looked like ordinary people who had been beaten down by the long stay. The buildings were dark and looming inside mainly the small rooms scattered, and the streets were cobblestone pathways inside the fortress like setup. The thin walls echoed with the sounds of torment of people crying or arguing . People wandered in the halls , their faces twisted in agony, their bodies contorted in pain no real doctors just cheap remedies . Everywhere Latrice and Wendy looked, they saw suffering, but some were happy .Tables, playing card games with grim determination. Others sat hunched over books, reading words that brought them no solace. And then there were those who roamed the streets like mindless zombies, their eyes vacant and their movements jerky. Latrice shivered as she took in the sight of so much pain and despair.

There had to be at least a thousand souls in the city, all trapped in a never-ending cycle of torment. She felt a cold grip of fear clutch at her heart, wondering if she would ever be able to escape this nightmarish place for real not just in thought .As she and Wendy walked through the crowded streets, a woman approached them. Her name was Shayna, and she introduced them to her son, a young boy with glasses and a haunted expression. Shayna explained that they trapped there for a while.

“what’s the little guys name”

“Leron, and he isn’t little he is nightmare, but I love him” She said before laughing.

“what’s the story, how did you end up in the pain pit”

“well I ordered a tow truck honey,” she said in New Orlean accent, and that bitch as Charles just tied us up and pulled our car in on tow truck.” “I been here ever since” she said before crying.

“don’t be so hard on your self girl, I’m not new to this shit, I been here for years she said before lighting up a manmade cigarette she bought in the stone city. They grew tobacco and other weird foods in the city using lamps that used oil. The stuff was nasty but at least they had it. “just hang in there ,ok” “one day we will all be free from this mess.” “thanks I needed that” Shayna replied they hugged and the woman walked away.

Carlos The Saint vs. Charles round two

he couldn’t accept that the monster had gotten away, he also

couldn’t really accept what he saw in the first place a homeless man turn into a dog and jump out of a window. He was now obsessed and hung posters of Charles face all over the city, he at least had Charles phone which had one picture of him in there. He even set up a cash reward with some of his college grant money for anyone who had any information about the strange man named Mr. Charles. It turned out that Ride buddy driver services didn’t even do a back ground check on Charles. Late one Saturday night Carlos received a call from a guy who wanted the money that Carlos had promised, two grand for anybody who knew the location of the ride buddy driver Mr. Charles. The man claimed that he was only a parking spot away from him at a restaurant. He couldn’t believe what he was hearing. He rushed and put on his gear and floored it out of the driveway of the house. He sped down the freeway to find the address that was given to him to the anonymous man. After minutes of driving he pulled into Pokies’ all you can eat crab shack and saw the man standing there. He walked over and looked at the car the man pointed two and handed the man the

money. Carlos was good for his word. The man thanked him graciously and rolled off in his pickup truck. He was exited he had found him again. He went back to his car and tried to park out of view to wait for Charles to walk out of the restaurant. It took hours. He even wondered if he had died inside or left with someone else. How much could a demon eat. Finally Charles walked out at almost twelve pm wearing all black and proceeded to open the car door. He looked up and noticed Carlos car and it was as if he had seen a ghost. He jumped in quickly and sped off and the chase began. They both sped out of pokies lot and hit the street. Charles accelerated his Cadillac and wave humorously out of the window. Carlos became enraged and floored the gas pedal to 75mph. they raced up the

dark street. Carlos was confused at how his car could never seem to reach the speed of Charles old fish tail Cadillac. It had to be supernatural because the car was just too old. Frustration soon took over Carlos as he never seemed to catch up. Finally a stroke happened. Charles reached a rail road track and the rail began to lower. The train began running down the track at high speed.

This was his chance and he was not about to miss out on taking out the man who he thought killed his brother. He downed a can of red bull and floored the gas as Charles tried to back away from the track running him into the train. The car flipped over and exploded and burst into flames. He sat around and waited for Charles to get out of car but he never did. Did Carlos the saint just kill an ancient demon?

A week had finally passed. The silver moon had returned. It was safer for travel but the hounds were a lot less active in the silver moon. The group was slightly reluctant to leave the peoples village after all; it was at least full of people with the same problem. It reminded them that they were not the only ones trapped in this semi hellish dimension. The group bid farewell to Ezekiel and the other ambassadors. Reality kicked it when the gate closed behind them blood was everywhere. The air reeked of death but there was no sign of the dogs. They were emboldened and afraid at the same time. They began to walk up the horrible trail in which Patrick had been mauled to death. They could hear the howling in the distance. But it wasn’t close enough to cause worry. Up in the tree lines Jason couldn’t help but notice flashes of colorful streaks moving through the trees. “Those are spirts of the undead

tormented souls trapped here, they are neither dead or alive like us, they frequent this forest as well.” they are merely aberrations, some stay here until they awake from comas, at

least that’s what Mrs. Mary told me.”

Jason was spooked he didn’t ask any more questions. Before they knew it they were half way home, no sign of any dogs. “There probably stalking some new entries. That’s why we don’t see any” Latrice said. None the less it works in our favor.” before they knew it, they could see the safety post Latrice and Wendy called home.” ‘Jason noticed something. “If there is no electricity why do the street lamps work?” he asked curiously. “I can answer that” said Latrice, “we searched for wires before there are none, and they are powered by some evil illusionary force.” Jason’s face filled with disappointment.

MANGO RED TIME

They walked slowly out of fuel, this evil stank dark place was too much for the young entertainers. The air in the Voo-Dalla forest was thick and heavy dead and organic only complemented by the strange noises they overheard . It was a dark place, a place

whispered to be full of bad entities those seen and unseen . They had been trapped in this evil forest for what felt like forever. “I am so tired, boy I should have packed more food,” Wendy sighed. Her voice was small in the huge, silent trees. Jason,

always trying to be brave, looked around. “We have to keep moving.

Remember, we need to find the Stone City, the peoples camp . That is our only way out of this Voo-Dalla mess, I swear this is like a really bad movie.” Terrell nodded,

clutching a small, broken flashlight. The forest was so dark that even the daylight struggled to touch the ground. Twisted roots like old snakes tripped them often. Bats flew overhead almost every other hour.

Latrice shivered, though the air was not cold. “This place feels wrong. Every shadow looks like it is watching us.” They had been walking for hours, their hope starting to shrink like a dying flame. The maps were confusing but they were never lost before. The trees here were huge, their bark black and rough, reaching up to a sky they could barely see.

Suddenly, a sound cut through the silence. It was music. Not a scary sound, but a clear, rhythmic beat. “Did you hear that?” Terrell whispered, stopping short extending his left ear. It seemed impossible at first but

it was not , it was clear music. Jason listened hard. “Music? Here? In the middle of this spooky forest?” The music grew a little louder, a modern rap beat mixed with a strange, low hum that seemed to come from the very earth. They walked toward the sound, moving cautiously between the dark trunks. The music was coming from a very large, gnarled oak tree. It looked older than time itself. They crept closer, their hearts beating fast. “Look,” Latrice pointed with a trembling finger.Near the base of the massive tree, hidden by hanging moss, there was something that looked out of place: a small, brass handle, like the one on an old wooden door.Curiosity won over fear. Jason reached out, his hand shaking a little, and grabbed the handle.

He pulled. Not knowing what to expect they all just paused and waited for the dark surprise that vood-dalla often had in store. With a soft, grinding sound, a small section of the tree trunk swung inward like a hidden door. Inside the small space, bathed in a faint, strange

green light, sat a young guy . He was wearing huge, over-the-ear headphones, nodding his head to the loud music playing only for him. The four friends stared. It

was a white guy dressed in hood clothing , young and thin he dawned a expensive watch , his face was dirty and he looked tired .Jason carefully stepped closer to the opening. “Hey are you ok?” he called out, but the music was too loud. He reached in and gently tapped the man’s shoulder. The guy jumped, pulling off his huge headphones. The music stopped abruptly. “Whoa!

What the—?” the guy exclaimed, almost drunk he sounded . He had a surprised, slightly annoyed look on his face.“Tango Red?” Jason gasped. The man smiled, a flash of white teeth in the dark forest gloom. “ Jason?

Terrell Guapo and Ak-bhugatti ? What are you guys doing deep in the Voo-Dalla nightmare?” It was Tango Red, the white rapper they had met briefly backstage at a music festival months ago. He looked completely out of place in the ancient, dark forest. “We are trapped,” Latrice explained quickly. “We need to find the Stone City.” Tango Red laughed, a surprisingly loud sound. “The Stone City, huh? Good luck somebody took me there I prefer out here I like to live life on the wild side.

But hey, I know a shortcut, maybe. Come on out, join the groove.” He stepped out of the tree trunk, which closed behind him with a quiet click.

“How did you get in there?” Terrell asked, looking suspiciously at the smooth wood. “A secret passage,” Tango Red said with a wink, adjusting his Platinum chain. “This forest is weird, man. It needs a good soundtrack to keep the bad spirits away. Want some water?” He pulled a shiny bottle from a small backpack. Relief washed over them. A friendly face, even a strange one, was better than the dark silence.

They followed him, walking close together. Tango Red kept humming his rap tune as they walked. “So, you just live in a tree?” Wendy asked, trying to keep up with his long strides. “Nah, I was just passing through, heading to a spot where the bass drops just right,” he replied. “But this Voo-Dalla place is messing with my GPS.” “ I actually made a call, and when the people came i stood right in front of them and they said they couldn't even see me.” “no joke that aint a rap verse, my guy we are legit ghost! the They walked for about ten minutes, the music fading slightly as Tango Red seemed to concentrate on the path. “wow I didn’t want to hear that” Terrell said shaking his head mystified. The shadows seemed to press closer now, darker than before. He seemed totally oblivious to what was going on.

“Man Charles got me too, he said be before rubbing his hands across his face” “tell me you guys seen him two” dude act like he was building security then put chloroform on my mouth, no lie” he held up his arm and showed them a bandage from a dog bite, oh yea and i saw them two , when he dropped be off i went off to smoke and stumbled into a whole pile of them sleeping.’ only 19 Mango red didn't have much manners. he often touched people when they didn't want to be touched, he was loud well dressed but really chaotic. “ I remember your from summer bash last year yo, your song was hype” Jason recalled, you were on fire and you showed us much love bro, i hate to see you here” “i hate to see me here too” mango replied.

They just kept walking, mango talked a lot, he did have a lot of extra food for some reason. Tree hide out spots were common in the area, no body even bothered ask

how he got inside of it.

“I know we know about those stinky green wolves but bro”.....he replied hesitating i seen something worse. Dude three days ago I was walking and a lady was laying in the street , I guess she was dropped off two, I started walking up to her but when I was like a hundred feet a way I saw two shadows come out of the tree and started dragging her yo, they pulled that chick into a tree screaming, they saw

me and been following me ever since. I don't know what they were, they made all kinds of noises they looked like shadow men they hissed and scratched that poor chick my guy, then they like pulled her into a dark tree, “you mean like inside of the tree” Jason asked petrified , “yes inside of the tree!” Mango replied popping bubble gum while he laced his boots.

That’s why i posted up inside this little spot, i found while trying to climb. I kicked the handle and the door

came open. I had catering in my back pack when Charles grabbed me i been grubbing and smoking ever since yo, he said before laughing playfully.” It’s been days since i seen those things, the shadow men.

“wow, bro you could have kept that, not more monsters” “that's the last thing i wanted to hear” “I heard about those tree things, Wendy replied. never saw it but i heard of it.” “just glad there gone now, honestly now I am kind of creeped out for real, never dealt with that”

After a while it was quiet. Latrice kept looking at the map. she didn't make anything of Mango red, they met new people every other day it seemed like, they came and went like the passing of the moon. Being from west palm beach florida, Mango hated the cold and complained every other minute.

He put on his head phones and they kept walking. Terrell was quiet. Latrice was focused. and Wendy just kept refixing her hair. they were now athletes as well as wannabe entertainers the forest was big and confusing and full of terror, but the girls had found the city many times.

An eerie silence last for an hour. the wind grew and began to rap around their arms and ankles. they heard a whispering in the back ground a type of hissing the moon even began to change color. “Wait, what on earth is that?” latrice whispered spotting a fast moving shadow running past the trees, “whoa” “be quiet, I think i saw one, i think we talked them up” she said whispering for the first time she too was terrified of the black shadows.

Suddenly, the ground under them felt soft, like mud. “Whoa, hold up,” Jason warned. Before anyone could react, a thick, oily shadow shot out from the base of a nearby tree. It was in the shape of faceless man. It wasn't just darkness; it was a solid, black shape. It moved fast, like a hungry snake long arms and claws . The shadow wrapped around Mango Red’s ankle.“ Hey! Get off!” Mango Red shouted, dropping his backpack. His fears had been realized they never stopped following him! “Don’t, stop don’t, not like this! I cant go out like this” “Noooooooooo!” he said face filled with sweat and fear.

He tried to pull away, but the shadow held him tight. They had never stopped following him, Latrice screamed, Wendy and Terrell froze in terror. Latrice grabbed his arm and Jason grabbed the other but the entity was strong like the power of five

men. The shadow dragged Mango Red backward with an awkward torque of force, towards another tree close to the one

he had emerged from earlier. He struggled, his voice filled with panic now, not music. “It’s pulling me! Help me, not like this!” he yelled. Jason and Terrell rushed forward, grabbing his arms, trying to yank him back. But the pull from the shadow was impossibly strong, stronger than four people combined. “No! Not again!” Tango Red cried out, his face tight with fear his headphones fell to the ground music still playing . With a sickening, wet sound, the shadow swallowed him whole inside of the tree, blood poured down the side painting the tree in the moon light . One moment he was there, struggling and screaming, and the next, the space where he stood was empty. They all gasped in horror holding their mouths in shock, even Latrice a veteran and wendy the same had never seen the tree things. The shadow vanished back into the darkness beneath the gnarled oak. The music player, which had fallen to the ground, started playing again, very faintly, a single, repeated, distorted bass note. Latrice stumbled back, tears welling in her eyes. “He’s gone, he’s gone that’s how it is” she said before wiping away the tears of defeat. The tree took him.” Silence returned to the Voo-Dalla forest, heavier and colder than before. The only sound was the weak, dying beat coming from the abandoned headphones. The Stone City felt a million miles away. They were alone again, with the memory of the music and the horror of the taking. And Mango red was now just a red stain on a tree. They all began to run as fast as they could to another part of the area.

Martyr Man Of Voo-dalla

They continued to walk and walk grew tired. Thirsty, funky, irritated and full of fear they continued to walk silently as they could through the crunchy leave. A thick mist hovered on the forest floor strangely no sign of where it came from. It was so thick sometimes they couldn’t even see adding to the natural since of danger they constantly felt. Noises often came from the back ground that sounded like people whispering but no one ever saw anybody. The boys walked in the front and the girls walked in the back. They looked around often hoping not to see a wolf or anything worse. It was at that point they noticed just how many tall dark ominous trees there really were. At one point they found themselves on a cliff. The looked around and noticed the sheer amount of dark forest illuminated by the

moon the tree tops looked alive almost like they were moving, and the faint red glow in the back ground, no houses or streets for miles. They also noticed an isolated tree that seemed to have something strapped to it. “what on earth is that?” Jason asked “ I couldn’t tell you” Latrice responded never saw it before. “should we bother to look” well it could be a clue, they all agreed to go and check it out. It took a while to make it down the hill, they watched their step carefully so as to not get injured badly there was no real medical services or real help. Finally they had made it down a steep hill. The closer they go to the large isolated tree, they noticed that the figured strapped to it looked like a man. Thick shaggy blonde hair lined the top of his head and what looked like a police uniform torn off covered his body. He looked like a former cop, a thirty something year old white guy that had been drug inside the voodoo hell dimension. The ensemble of teenagers slowly approached vexed at what to expect really. The man looked to be breathing. They decided to try and remove the ropes that held him to the tree. He suddenly looked up. In a gasping breath he said “no! don’t do that.” “why ?we were trying to help you”

they quickly noticed pins all over the man's body, almost as if demons had come around often just to tortured him by sticking in pins and then just leaving, they looked painful and it sent chills down the spines of all of those who looked upon them. The pins were small sharp and looked to be made of iron. "in an exhausted tone the man said, don't save me I am a martyr, my purpose is to tell you the future, you see there's a rule here in this crazy voodoo land. If a person decides to die on their own accord given direction to the escape of others they will escape too, they must accept the torture for ten years. But there is a much darker side as well if a person chooses to send others towards their death, or feed others to the hounds they too shall be set free in

ten years, but those who choose that path often become prey." "so what's our future?" Wendy asked she didn't seemed confused it made sense to her although she didn't like either path to freedom. "All or maybe all but one will get a chance at escape, if you choose not fear or despair, beware of a coming problem beyond the dogs, talk to the priest at the camp he will give the answer you need, I see the light for all of you." The man suddenly fell asleep and that

was it. “well you heard what he said he doesn’t want to be free’ Latrice interjected. “he may already be on his way out, this is crazy I never heard these rules before, maybe he is lying, well whatever the truth we don’t have time for all of this, but it does feed the Martin K bower voodoo story.” They all slowly turned and continued to walk, they still could not get the painful pins in his body out of their heads it was the most disturbing thing that they had seen so far.

A bed of Dogs and Lucien

After the weird guy on the tree, they could not fathom how things could get any worse, it seemed like everything all ways went downhill in this wretched place. “man I tell you let’s not investigate anything else” Terrell announced.

“why you scared, thug rapper,” Wendy said before laughing “to keep it real I have gotten used to some of the bad surprises, maybe because we have been here longer. “well he said he didn’t

want to be saved” Latrice said before taking a drink of water, I mean there has to be a better way out than that.” “so I guess he was saying it’s kind of like a strange game

and you have to pick your strategy, but to keep it real I think I would rather just mutilate the dogs. Confused they all continued to walk in cold windy trees until they saw a man standing in the road. “oh hell no!” Jason said we are not about to investigate no more weird shit, this isn’t Scooby doo and the mystery gang, why we can’t meet any cool people like biggie and Pac they dead, why are they not in here, Voodalla hell or whatever this ghetto ass dimension supposed to be called. The man waved and walked directly into the moon light. They recognized him it was Lucien they had met earlier. “hey my boy, I didn’t think I would see you too again to be honest.” “We know him, what’s up dude, surprised to see you still alive.” “yeah man I’m a survivor due, he said before wiping his head. They noticed his closed looked worse, torn ragged and stained in blood and his shoulder looked bandaged. “ I think you know where you cats going” the big camp right, with all of the people, I can take you the rest of the way I been there.” They all looked at each other.

“yeah I guess If you guys know him like you said.” The girls responded. So slowly but surely they followed Lucien who carried a torch with him. His club outfit was destroyed and he just seemed different than the first time. He seemed a bit more tense and less humorous. They followed Lucien quietly for an hour down the beaten path. Finally he came to a spot that looked covered in scrubs. “just over here come on.” They looked into the scrubs and saw a bed of sleeping hell dogs piled on top of each other. “what the hell” are you crazy Jason whispered. To every ones shock Lucien yelled into the dogs ears “wake up its lunch

time bitches!” Latrice immediately attacked Lucien from behind and the two began to fight. He easily pushed Latrice to the ground, Lucien was a large guy. It was obvious at this point that Lucien had talked to the guy on the tree and decided to feed them to the hounds. His eyes looked savage ruthless and possessed! he looked nothing like the happy ds that they had met earlier who simply wanted to talk and roll weed.

“in case you haven’t figured it out, im possessed he they got me, but I feel great, I see the light now if I feed them churchy losers for ten years I will be out of here in no time.” He then pulled out a gun and aimed it all of them, don’t try to leave or I will blow your heads off. When the hounds awake you will be lunch, just accept your

fate, I got this nice little forty five from the weak officer hanging on the tree I found it in his pants pocket. The way I see it is dog eat dog in here, I grew up in the hood oblock, my mom and pops was dead before I was nine, I hustled homeless until I was eighteen, I can survive this place, I am the truth. In the back ground they could hear dogs slowly coming out the thorny nest one by one. “bro what the hell, you gave up too quick we learned to kill them big bro, this is not the right move for real.” The dogs slowly walked out into the open bearing nasty dripping dingy fangs eyes enraged that they had been woken up early. Lucien began laughing and smiling in delight. He slowly began to back up and started to run. Surprisingly one animal took off right after him. They all began to fight with the animals now that Lucien was gone they had a chance. He had no Idea how skilled they were at fighting. His leaving secured their survival. The small wolf pack was dead in a matter of ten minutes. Meanwhile up the road Lucien had ran into some bushes to catch his breath. Laughing he spoke to himself “boy, if this isn’t some real trap

god shit.” I got ,ten years of this I’m a killer I got this game on.” Suddenly Lucien heard a sound in the bushes, it sounded like growling. “man what the fuck” he said, before slowly peeping out of the bushes. Instantly a black set of jaws locked onto his face and began to shake him violently. Blood covered the surrounding trees and it soon went silently. The large hefty devilish wolf began to drag him down the side of a hill preparing to feed him to her cubs.

Shit was getting real, and quickly recovered from what was supposed to be their execution. Lucien’s personality sent a chill down their spines, imagine how many more had came to the same conclusion, dog eat dog, or rather human eat human philosophy. Everything went silent for a while and then they heard a growling in the distance again. It was a hound he was 100 feet away but luckily they were right in front of the post. The team began running as fast as they could. Jason ripped the door open and everyone rushed in side. He locked it tightly on the way down. Wendy began to light the lanterns and the coal heater.

They were home again at least the only home they knew. That night they frantically

reviewed strategies on how they might find and kill the gatekeeper dogs. After years of being held hostage, Wendy and Latrice began to think about what it would be like to see their mothers and fathers again. What it would be like to see the sun shine and the beautiful feeling of walking through the woods in peace. Their faces began to sport a type of new glow to it. They believed in Jason and Terrell and they now believed in themselves. Wendy began to cook while the others began to make plans. If they wanted to kill the main creatures, this plan

had to be flawless they didn't want to risk death amongst the group so everything had to line up perfectly.

"The element of surprise is the best thing we have, they are powerful and quick predators we don't want to risk dying." "My caretaker Mary said she killed one once by digging a hole in the ground and covering the hole with leaves and branches so that it looked natural and when the beast came it fell into the hole.

Mary and her husband at the time impaled it until it died. The hole was deep enough so that the creature just couldn't climb out her also file the hole slightly with water so that each time he would try to climb he would slip."

"it's not a perfect idea said Wendy but it's definitely a safe one.' "That doesn't sound too bad said Jason but we need a backup plan just in case it doesn't work. We could also use that dog scent stuff we got from the village to lure the monster in." Latrice opened a compartment in the wall and took out two primitive looking shovels and threw them in the center of the floor. Suddenly the group began to hear a strange sound like growling and the heavy trotting footsteps of dogs circling up above. They often rattled the door but they could not break in. The group remained quiet while Jason went to make sure the door was totally secure.

Sporadically they heard a knocking on the door that sounded like human hands and faint voice resounded. "Is there anyone in there if so please let me in help!!!" The voice sounded like another guy but he sounded older like in his 40's. The group looked at each other and began to debate whether or not they should open the door to save him. They all agreed it was too risky but they still considered different ways

they may have been able to help him.

Out of nowhere, the man let out a painful shriek and scream. A raw thud song penetrated the door. Blood oozed into

the bunker from cracks and hinges of the door. It was too late! he was gone. The group looked at each other in silence heads hung low in shame. It was truly unfortunate but they had to continue on with their plans. They had already been trained to fight a hound, but now they needed the ability to withstand the poisonous bite from the gatekeeper hounds and then there was the shapeshifting that the guy in the village mentioned. “What do we do if we are bitten said Wendy, didn’t he say they have a poisonous bite?” “We could use those arm and leg protectors Latrice gave us earlier said Terrell. We just need something to stop fangs from sinking in” Replied Jason “Great idea said Wendy and she went to retrieve the braces. Last but not least, what about shapeshifting said Wendy what in the world will we do if that happens?”

“we don’t have a plan for that said Latrice, the goal is to kill it before it starts doing any off that” beware you guys, there is a real chance we could die fighting the gatekeeper. The group designated Terrell to be the one to retrieve the key from the wolf’s belly. A couple of hours had passed. The group stared boringly at the hourglass, in the corner of the room. They were waiting silently patiently for the fight of their lives. They were all equally thrilled at the idea of leaving and scared to die all at the same time. The thought of seeing their families again filled their hearts with super human courage and deep down they knew it was worth the risk to escape this dark place. Purgatory was a place that many called home against their will. They were neither dead nor alive. Life in the sinister dimension changed

each person who found themselves there. Finally, they decided it was time to go time to face the guardian of this hell like place.

They gathered all of their materials and marched up the stairs draped in primitive yet reliable armor. Jason opened the door still soaked with blood. He slowly and

carefully peeped out. The coast was clear, and all was silent the demon dogs were gone.

They all gradually sprouted from the opening in the ground and began to stretch their limbs. They began to search for a spot to dig. They found one not far from the post. The general feeling amongst the group was if the plan fails run back to the safety post. They began to dig through the leaves, grass and branches and began to move some serious earth. Jason plunged his shovel into something hard. He reached down to uncover what it was.

He slowly removed the dirt from the object to expose its identity. To his dismay it was a skull of what looked like an 8-year-old girl. Disgusted by what he saw he still continued to dig. The group took turns digging alternating between the boys and girls. This night was a silver moon so the dogs were expected to be active but not the most intense. Finally, the hole was dug. It was deep enough to hold one of them. The team went to a nearby pond that had fresh drinking water and filled up some pales.

They tossed as much water into the hole as it could handle. It was good and muddy.

He returned the old man?

As Latrice, Jason, and Terrell trudged wearily through the dark and twisted forest, their destination of Stone City seemed further away than ever, The reality of this crappy place was too much on all of them, the old and new members . The eerie sounds that surrounded them only added to their exhaustion, but they knew they had to press on. They had a mission to fulfill, a duty to protect their village from the sinister forces that loomed in the distance. Voodalla, the Dark Dimension, was a place of nightmares, filled with dark magic and malevolent entities . The trio had been tasked with seeking out the source of the strange disturbances that had been plaguing their land, and they knew that Stone City held the key to unlocking the mystery.As they pushed forward, the sounds of moaning and whispering filled the air, sending shivers down their spines.

Latrice gripped her fighting stick tightly, her senses on high alert as they cautiously made their way through the twisted trees and brushes. Suddenly, they stumbled upon a clearing where an old black man sat on a log, his leg wounded and oozing strange, slimy tendrils. The man introduced himself as Gerald, explaining that he had survived a brutal attack by a demon in the nearby waters. ‘oh don’t mind me, glad to see you though” “do you need help” wendy said calmly. “of course as long as you not one of those damn demons he said looking defensively. He said in an exhausted voice, his eyes looked out of his mind like he had seen too much. “well, at this point i dont know if help matters” He clutched the slimy tentacle in his hand, grimacing in pain as he recounted his terrifying ordeal. Latrice, Jason, and Terrell exchanged worried glances, realizing that they were not alone in this treacherous land, there were even more evil things to look out for than they thought. Feeling a sense of duty to help Gerald, the trio decided to bring him along on their journey to Stone

City. Despite his injury, the old man seemed to possess a wealth of knowledge about the dark forces that lurked in the shadows, and they knew that his expertise could prove invaluable in their quest. He was cold at first but began to warm up to them. He seemed genuinely happy to see humans as the large muscular old man limped forward aided by Terrell’s shoulder.As they continued on their way, the forest grew darker and more twisted, the air thick with a sense of foreboding. Gerald shared stories of his past encounters with demons and spirits, his words painting a vivid picture of the horrors that awaited them in Stone City.

A second encounter

Close to the water, Latrice, Wendy, and Terrell sat on a bunch of rocks, taking a rest after a long day of hiking. They were exhausted but content, enjoying the peacefulness of the night. As they sat down, they took out some food and began to eat, the aroma filling the air around them. The night was dark and cold, with the mist rising from the ground like ghostly tendrils. The moon hung in the sky, its silver light casting a gentle glow over the landscape. The trees above them swayed in the wind, the rustling of leaves adding to the eerie atmosphere. “where the rest of the food at?” Jason asked. Wendy pulled out a large sage and began to spread sandwiches and other small items around. They carried water bottles, they knew that the surrounding rivers and lakes were sometimes poison, it was merely another

painful fact of being in black peoples version of hell. ‘so Gerald, what were you saying when we first met you, we couldn’t here you all the way.” “well young” lady he said, kneeling and eating simultaneously, “ I was dropped off by that bitch Charles, I killed a few animals with my bare hands you know, but they chased me to the river and I jumped in, but something was in their, something really strange, it was like a black demon of the waters it was kind of like of squid, but it made these weird whispering noises into the back of my mind, you know like telepathy telling me all the evil things it was going to do to my body. It had like a large evil human face on it too, strangest thing I ever saw, any who it tried to drown me with its evil tentacles, I fought and kicked and broke my leg but, he said fighting the tears I managed to cut the limb off with a hunting knife that I had in my pocket. I swam back to the waters edge, but I tell you that wasn’t no damn animal in the water it was pure damn evil.After a while Jason quiet and wondering off , noticed a trickle and ripple forming on the water nearby. A few bubbles popped to the surface, causing Terrell to frown in confusion. Gerald, who had been recently talking became quiet, suddenly appeared, his expression one of panic and terror ."Run! Oh not again, It's coming!" he shouted, fear evident in his voice. The group's relaxed demeanor vanished as they scrambled to their feet, unsure of what was about to happen looking around and confused they asked Gerald “what is coming” “the damn water demon thing” it may of heard us talking. They followed Gerald's lead, running as fast as they could away from the water but grabbing the bags slowed them down.But it was too late. A large black tentacle, covered in barbs and dripping water, shot out from the depths of the lake. It latched onto Terrell's leg, knocking him to the ground with a cry of pain. The others

watched in horror as the tentacle began to

drag him towards the water's edge.Without hesitation, Latrice, Wendy, and Gerald sprang into action. They grabbed sticks and rocks, hacking away at the monstrous appendage with all their might. The tentacle writhed and thrashed, but they refused to give up. Finally, with one last powerful blow, they severed the creature's arm, causing it to release its grip on Terrell.But their relief was short-lived as they heard a bloodcurdling scream echo through the night. Suddenly, two glowing eyes appeared beneath the surface of the water, staring at them with a malevolent gaze. The eyes blinked once before disappearing, leaving the group shaken and terrified.They knew they had encountered something truly horrifying, something that defied explanation. As they caught their breath and tended to Terrell's injuries, they could only wonder what other dangers lurked in the depths of the lake and in voodalla itself. As they made their way back to safety, the memory of the monstrous creature haunted their thoughts the large spiked barbs and the horned cusp dagger like were terrifying and the material was so hard to hack through that it was hard to kill almost like armor it was, a reminder that in the darkness of the night, anything could be lurking just beneath the surface, waiting to strike. And so, they vowed to never venture close to the water again, knowing that some terrors were best left undisturbed.

The Drama Continues

Jason had become increasingly irritated with Latrice overtime, they weren’t looking for a leader they just wanted out of this ghetto mess of a nightmare. She had been acting strange ever since they arrived at the secluded dungeon she called a

home in the dark forest, constantly insisting that they couldn't leave. Jason couldn't shake the feeling that there was something off about her. That maybe she was the real problem, not the demons or Charles.One night, Jason pulled Terrell aside and suggested they take a quick walk in the dark forest to chat he promised that it would not be long. As they walked towards a hollow tree, Jason began to voice his concerns."Man, don't you think there's something odd about Latrice? “here we go, man what, like what is strange about Latrice, she hasn’t been anything but help since we got here” “well how can I say this, I think she's a lunatic “rell” wake the hell up! She keeps saying we can't leave, but she never tested or showed us anything," Jason whispered. “like seriously, how do you know she’s not just nuts,” “ok, how is should is she nuts and we have seen how many supernatural demons since we been here dog” demons don’t just pop up in Atlanta all willy nilly.”

“ok, you got a point demons” “but still, she just can’t keep trying to make all the decisions like she Zena warrior princess or something, how do we know if she can even find the stone city. “wait be quiet” “what wolves” no Terrell said. I hear something else like, something familiar. Moments later, the distinct sound of a chopper could be heard from up above. “that’s a chopper” Terrell said laughing, maybe you were right after all for real, sorry I doubted you dog” Jason's heart raced as he realized they might have a chance to escape. He ran into the lime light of the chopper, which shone its light on the ground. He blissfully fell to

his knees crying ready for his ascension and trip home. But something odd happened.But to his horror, the pilot acted as if he saw nothing on the ground he flew in circle and shined the light below ,and simply flew away slowly as to continue the search. Confused and terrified, Jason looked back at Terrell, only to find Latrice walking back into view." It's like I told you, you can't leave," Latrice said calmly."Shut up, bitch! You may have something to do with this. Maybe you're a forest demon too," Jason snapped, his fear turning into anger. “b****!” I got your b**** right here. Latrice walking forward in a fighting stance, and Jason did the same “stop right there” Terrell said this is not going to happen not on my watch. “why not I think I can take her” Jason said seething with anger. I’m tired of hood chick warrior queen telling us what to do I want proof we can’t just drive out of here. “fine, Latrice said I can give it to you” every one became quiet awaiting what she would say. “follow me” she said

walking angrily toward the road.

“you want proof. So I will give it to you, I will find us a car, there are many of them along the road, cars that Charles have left behind, most of them work, keys in the ignition and everything, but there is a reason no one drives them, there is no way out and the sounds attracts hundreds of dogs at times. There are also many roads here that wind through the woods but they are like a figure eight and they lead no where or in circles. After an hour of walking they found themselves on the sides of a different road than the one they were dropped off. To everyone’s surprise, there was a small pink mini van parked near the side of the road. They slowly approached the car and examined it with Jason’s flash light. It was empty after opening the front door they notice keys were in the ignition. Excited they all jumped in. the cargo

van was empty in the back and allowed for Wendy Jason Terrell and Gerald to load up in the back. Latrice got in the drivers seat and started the car they were all excited but deep down they believed her but they knew it would lead to nothing. She turned off the head lights so that it would not attract the animals. To everyone’s pleasant surprise, it started and they began driving slowly up the road. They enjoyed the sound of an engine and the purr of a car. After forty five minutes they came to a split set of streets. “left or right” she asked the squad resting behind her.

They all agreed to go right, she wanted them to choose so they wouldn’t think she was making this up. She turned right down a dark dingy road and was forced to turn the lights on, even though it could attract the things that lurked in the shadows.

They rolled slowly through cracked pavement vines and other debris laying in the road, they even road past a few skeletons. The ride was eerie nerve wrecking and slow. “you see, that’s one no one tries this, Jason’ she said condescendingly. After passing through they drove and drove and nothing happened. Just street lights woods and forest until Jason saw something. What on earth is that? He asked “what” they all asked “that” he said pointing to a bright light up the road. Latrice pulled up the hill and saw a stunning light, mesmerizing almost. “its our way out” jason said laughing . drive in everyone started yelling, latrice had heard stories about this light but she decided to stay quiet, they all held there breath as she drove into the light. They were in and out as quickly as they could remember. they opened there eyes

and saw the same dark road the Charles had dropped them off on.

“so apparently jason needs another explanation” so jason let me break this down in lamens terms, were stuck dummy, there is no

easy way out” ‘but it like this in the evil game voodalla, you have to play by its rules or you never escape, its almost like where ghost caught between heaven hell and earth, if you lose at the evil game your body is found in the woods in the earth world and your officially dead, as if you were simply killed by Charles or some other nutcase, if you win at the game, your body and you return home as if nothing ever happened.” Jason and Gerald both looked stunned. They were disappointed but had gotten used to it. “I’m sorry I called you all those names Jason said to latrice. “all is forgiven I have heard worse” “just don’t come up with anymore stupid ideas please. “agreed” he said looking stunned.

Payback time, Mrs. T has her chance

Mrs. T was filled with worry. Her son, Jason, had vanished

without a trace Brandon was guilty and she knew it. The incident at the pizza diner made her furious. He was a good kid, always respectful and kind and ready for his career, but now nothing, just a sob story a statistic. It had been months since anyone had seen him. The police had little to go on, only that Jason had last been spotted near Tony's Pizza Palace. And then later on by the grave yard by a random bus driver. Mrs. T had questioned the workers, but they had no answers, they were ghetto underpaid and didn't care. The only person who raised her suspicions was a young man named Brandon. He worked at the pizza palace and often looked at Jason strangely, he was even spotted on camera with them and claimed that he didn't know him at all against the will of the investigators and Jason's mother . Mrs. T. believed he knew more than he was letting on. An uneasy feeling settled in her stomach when she thought of him. She had to find Jason. As night fell, Mrs. T drove down the winding roads of the town, filled with cigarettes and hot snacks from the local Seven eleven, even the loud radio could not tame her mind, her heart was racing she knew she was breaking the law but she did it for love of her kid and that should at least count in court. It was dark, and the trees loomed over her, casting spooky shadows. She

couldn't shake the feeling that she might find a clue. Her headlights pierced through the darkness, revealing the sign for Tony's Pizza Palace.Suddenly, she spotted a familiar car parked by the side of the road. It was a red convertible. Sitting inside were Brandon and his girlfriend, Mina. They were laughing and talking, completely unaware of the danger lurking around them. A mix of fear and anger filled Mrs. T. Could Brandon be part of Jason's disappearance?She gripped the steering wheel

tightly, her knuckles turning white. Should she confront them? “burnt fork my a** she said to herself I in rage, What if Brandon hurt Jason? The thought sent chills down her spine. This ordinary punk has taken her sons life! She decided she had to do something—anything.Mrs. T parked her car a little way down the road. With her heart pounding in her chest, she got out and walked quietly toward the convertible. The night was eerily quiet, and the stars twinkled above, casting a faint glow. As she got closer, she could hear Brandon’s laughter. Mina giggled in response, making Mrs. T’s stomach churn.Drawing in a deep breath, Mrs. T took a step closer. Her fingers trembled as she thought of Jason. Fueled by anger and desperation, she found a heavy rock on the ground. Without thinking twice, she raised it

high above her head, ready to act. “Hey!” Mrs. T shouted, startling them. Brandon and Mina turned, their faces filled with surprise. In a moment of rage, she threw the rock at the convertible. It struck the hood with a loud thud, and the sound echoed in the stillness of the night.“Who the hell are you?” Brandon shouted, jumping out of the car. His surprise turned to fury as he looked at Mrs. T, who held another rock in her hand.“I am Jason’s mother! What do you know about my son?” she yelled, her voice breaking with emotion.Mina looked frightened. “Calm down! We don’t know anything!” she cried, but Mrs. T couldn’t control her anger.In a fit of rage, Mrs. T ran toward the car, ready to do whatever it took to extract answers. Brandon lunged forward, trying to block her path, but a rush of adrenaline fueled her with unexpected strength. She felt empowered and terrified at the same time. She pushed Brandon away and dived into the convertible, desperate to find evidence or a hint about Jason.In the chaos, Brandon shoved her back, and Mina screamed. Mrs. T stumbled and grabbed the steering wheel to steady herself. The car rocked back and forth from the sudden movements. Suddenly, the convertible, teetering on the edge of the road, slid down a small slope, and with one swift motion, it

tipped over and plunged into the nearby lake.A loud splash filled the air as the water consumed the car. Mrs. T gasped in horror, her heart dropping as she watched the convertible sink. The screams of Brandon and Mina echoed in her ears, but all she could see was the dark water swallowing them whole.With a mix of panic and

disbelief, she stood frozen at the edge. Had she just killed them? She felt a dark wave of relief wash over her; maybe Brandon would never hurt her son now. But deep inside, an eerie feeling crept in. She glanced around; the night felt colder, alive with whispers, almost as if the trees were laughing at what had just happened.Suddenly realizing the gravity of what she had done, she jumped back into her car, her heart racing even faster.

She quickly drove away from the scene, her mind spinning. It was as if the night was alive with her guilt.Everyone had warned her not to let anger take over, but she had lost herself in that moment. As she sped through the dark streets, she felt a strange sense of joy for a fleeting moment—a laugh bubbled up inside her, startling her as it escaped.She thought about Jason and the danger he might be in. As she turned on her street, she believed she had freed herself from a monster, yet part of her was terrified. Would Brandon and Mina ever resurface? Would this

haunt her forever?Mrs. T parked her car and sat in silence, the chill of the night creeping into her bones. The laugh faded away, but the weight of her choice weighed heavily on her heart. She had lost more than just her son; she had lost a part of herself that she would never get back, and the darkness of the night seemed to seep into her soul.And in that haunting moment, she wondered if she was truly free or if she had just opened a door to something much darker. She lit up a cigarette and parked her car behind a large church up the road and went to sleep, she slept smiling thinking about the burnt fork .

Showdown for home

Jason began to assemble sticks this plan was damn Ludacris, but it had to work or they would all become food for the strange ones, dog food in an uknown world never found again was not a good concept. They huddled together branches leaves and plants to make a trap door . He wanted it to look as natural as possible, so that

the dumb animals would trap themselves. The group each grabbed one corner of the giant door and carefully lowered it on top of the hole. It was complete. They all smiled with satisfaction. The original plan was for Wendy to stand on the opposite side of the hole and scream for help. By then the scent

would have already been poured on the ground. The rest of the group was supposed to hide under piles of leaves weapons concealed and when the animal fell into the whole rush him with the spears. Jason began to pour the “dog scent” potion around the hole. Everyone got into place. Two hours had passed, and there was no sign of the gatekeeper. The team looked out from under the leaves patiently. Suddenly without warning, a deer came galloping out from the darkness of the night. He curiously examined the area and began sniffing the grass. He walked about ten feet forward and began undergo some type of strange metamorphosis and to their amazement, transformed into a large unique looking dog , its appearance was petrifying. It was the gate keeper! He sported a large yellow stripe down his back his head was large and menacing. He was different looking than the other dogs and the alpha dogs. His snout was long and bear like. His teeth large and shined like black glass. The large almond shaped eyes looked pure evil. A black mane covered his neck much like a lion. His hair was shaggy and dread locked and coarse the same black and green animal fur lined his body the same as the smaller animals . After stepping into the light of the moon, he immediately spotted Wendy. A chill ran down her spine when they locked eyes. She knew she was looking directly into the eyes of one of the guardians of hell a creature so menacing many had accepted enslavement rather than fight him. She remembered her role, and immediately started to scream “help!”. The team was poised and ready. The snarling monster began to run, forward eyes firmly on Wendy. He was engaged for the kill, but to everyone’s shock, suddenly stopped right at the mouth of the hole. He began to sniff at the door, almost as if he knew it was a trap! The group watched on in horror only wondering what would happen to Wendy if they

didn’t trap him. The guys began to whisper to each other and came up with a plan. They decided to rush him from behind pushing him into the hole, but they had to be

fast and strong. On the count of three, both guys burst out of the leaves. They began to run forward at maximum speed spears aimed at the gate keeper's rear end.

After about 10 seconds their spheres were firmly planted in the hound's backside. They began to push but the hound did not move. The gatekeeper looked to be at least 600 pounds of muscle. Latrice saw what was going on and she decided to push from a different angle. She rushed in from the side and began striking the wolf with the dagger. His massive monster began to slide and the trap door broke instantly. It made a loud crackling thud, and leaves and branches went up in the air and the best plummeted to the bottom of the whole. It was muddy and

slippery. He made several attempts to escape all failed. The group begin the jab into the hole with the longest spear they had. On the third jab the monster bit down on the spear and began to pull Jason forward. Jason began to slide forward towards to hole in the tug of war of death. The others quickly saw what was about to happen and each of them grabbed on to Jason and pulled him backward. The spear went into the hole none the less they kept striking. Terrell began to hurl giant rocks into the whole many of which wounded the animal. The animal began to move slower after a while he crouched down and began to pant breathing heavily and drooling. He began to howl demonically and smoke that seemed to rise from the earth itself began to fill the hole.

They were all vexed and confused. Shortly after the smoke dissipated, there was a large bat like creature crouched in the hole. Black mossy looking hair filled his back and large leathery

wings protruded from his muscular body. It was obvious at this point that the hound had shapeshifted.

"Oh no he shifted!" said Latrice. "We have to stop him. "After screeching at the teenagers a couple of times the creature began to flap his wings and attempted to fly away. He began flapping his wings trying to create an uplift for takeoff. After a few flaps his body was well off the ground and out of the mud. Upon making it to the mouth of the hole Wendy hurled a spear right through the wing of the animal

crashing right back into the pit. The bat demon screamed and flapped in circles and began to bite his own tail out of frustration. He began to claw at the sides of the muddy hole and sling mud up above right at them. The monster stopped and paused and then let out a high frequency noise that almost ruptured the eardrums of the group. They all fell to the ground in pain, as the supersonic sound pierced the eardrums of the young teenagers. Suddenly the creature stopped making the noise.

“I’m tired of this” said Jason and he picked up the biggest rock he could find.” it worked once, it could work again. “He ran towards the whole, and leaped directly onto the back of the bat like monster and he began to strike relentlessly at the head of the demon. The monster made a deadly noise again and Terrell fell into the mud covering his eardrums. Their noses and ear drums began to bleed immensely. In fear that Jason would die, Terrell leapt in after him. Full of mud, he began to slice at the monsters other wing. The monster had tolerated enough, he immediately grabbed Jason by his neck slamming him into the mud. He grabbed Terrell’s arm and looked into his eyes, the

creature’s eyes were pitch black. Terrell felt pure evil run through

his veins when he looked in the creature’s eyes. He scratched Terrell across the chest ripping his shirt. He let out a screeching squeal and began trying to bite Terrell’s arm. Latrice, screamed in fear and concern watching the ferocious attack. She knew the shapeshifters bite was poison. But she also remembered he was wearing the arm braces that she had given him when she trained him. Terrell stopped moving and sunk under the water. The monster turned towards Jason and scratched him down the side of his back. “In a weird twist of events, the monster mumbled out a few demonic words. In a deep evil intonation of voice he uttered “*innocent souls huh? Spare me the lies”* and screamed demonically.

If Latrice didn’t do anything, they were going to die at the hands of the malevolent

gatekeeper. She positioned herself behind him from up above while he was attacking Jason. She grabbed the shortest spear she had. It took her 2 minutes to concentrate. She hurled the spear like a javelin into the back of the creature and the spear went through him and into the waters. The thing dropped instantly into the muddy waters moaning in pain.

Terrell emerged from the mud still alive he walked towards the creature's body to confirm that it was dead. It wasn't breathing or moving. He began to slice open and he meticulously sort through slimy foul smelling guts until he touched something hard. It was the key! He pulled it up so he could view it. It was a golden cross covered in strange symbols with a key attached to the body part of it . They began to scream and celebrate and hug each other in the mud. It was like they had won the lottery!

Latrice lowered a rope down to pull them out. Once they reached the surface they all celebrated hugged and screamed. Suddenly they heard a familiar howling. It was the scent! It attracted more demon dogs! They didn't have strength to fight anymore. Jason suddenly stumbled over something and fell face first into the ground. He arose with maggots falling from his face. Screaming in horror he tried to shake off the bugs. Terrell leaned down to see what he tripped over. It was a dead body!

After looking even closer the face looked familiar." It was DJ Lucien. Apparently the cloak didn't work perfectly after all, or it was even possibly an evil trick, a joke by one of the demons. "We don't have time to examine dead bodies let's go yawl" Latrice yelled.

They could see at least 5 dogs coming up the side of the hill. They all began to run as fast as they could back towards the post. It wasn't very far. They made it quickly. The dogs were still in view. Once inside they could hear the monsters pacing around the roof growling with pure anger.

The group gathered in the center of the floor hugging each other all crying. "How can we ever repay you?" said Latrice. "Simple" said Terrell. "Be my girlfriend" "of

course” she said.

They all continued to hug and embrace the fact that they were about to leave possibly, forever. After rejoicing, they decided to pull out the key. “So how does this work?” Said Jason. “I don’t really know, I’ve never had the key before obviously” said Latrice before laughing to herself. I guess we are supposed to hold it all at one once. They all gathered in the center of the room and grabbed the key. Not knowing what to expect, they all bowed their heads and just hoped for the best. A warm tingling

sensation came over them and they closed their eyes. When they opened them again, they could see a bright white door illuminated with a brilliant green light. They all slowly began to walk towards the intense light. The large Gate was still open and they could see two people approaching as well. They all looked at each other and were speechless. The sun shined brightly and grazed their cold exhausted skin. They had finally escaped purgatory or did they. All they had to do was walk through the gateway.

The return unwanted

Latrice, Wendy, Jason, and Terrell stood before a shimmering, swirling gate. This was it! The moment of all moments, Latrice shed tears staring at the beautiful light , the way home she had hoped for years. The portal to freedom, the way out of Voodalla, the evil world they had been trapped in for what felt like forever. The air around the gate hummed with strange energy, a mix of fear and hope.“ Is this really it?” Wendy whispered, her eyes wide. She clutched a small, glowing cross that had helped them find the key. Jason nodded, his face grim. “The ancient texts said this gate would open when the key was turned just right. We did it.” He looked at Latrice. She held the heavy, metallic key, its surface etched with glowing runes.Terrell checked the surroundings nervously. Voodalla was a dangerous place, full of shadowy creatures and traps set by the evil ruler, the evil himself or at least his minions. “We need to go now. Before anything else finds us.” Latrice placed the key into a slot beside the gate. With a deep, groaning sound, the swirling colors intensified. The gate stabilized, becoming a clear window showing a green, sunny landscape—their world.“After you,

Latrice," Jason said, stepping back respectfully. Just as Latrice reached out to touch the smooth surface of the portal, a sharp, cold voice cut through the air."Not so fast!" "really, you thought you could just leave me for dead and take my man sweetie!" They all spun around. Standing a short distance away, arms crossed, was Rockelle. Her face was twisted in anger, and beside her stood JJ, a short , quiet man whose eyes seemed dull and unresponsive. Jason froze. "Rockelle? How did you get here?" Rockelle had been Jason's girlfriend before they were pulled into Voodalla. Jason had left her behind in a desperate move to save himself and the others early on, a decision that had haunted him. "Did you think you could just leave me to rot in this awful place, Jason?" Rockelle sneered. Her gaze then flicked to Latrice, and her anger sharpened instantly. "Especially with *her*."Latrice felt a sudden wave of heat rush over her. Rockelle had always been intensely jealous of Latrice, believing Latrice was prettier and smarter."This isn't the time for this, Rockelle," Latrice said firmly. "We found the way out. Come with us, or stay here, but let us leave."Rockelle laughed, a harsh, unpleasant sound. "Leave? You think I'll let the girl who stole my boyfriend's attention escape without paying for what she did?" Before anyone could react, Rockelle lunged. She didn't go for Jason. She went straight for Latrice. Rockelle was surprisingly strong, fueled by months of bitter resentment. She shoved Latrice hard against a crumbling stone pillar near the gate. Latrice stumbled but quickly regained her balance."You always thought you were better!" Rockelle screamed, swinging a wild punch.Latrice ducked, the punch missing her head by inches. Curiosity about the gate faded instantly, replaced by the need for survival. This was a real fight, not one of Voodalla's staged traps.Wendy and Terrell rushed forward to intervene, but Rockelle pushed them back with

surprising force. "Stay out of this! This is between the two of us!"Latrice knew she couldn't afford to lose. If she was knocked out, they might all be trapped again. She sidestepped another attack and delivered a solid block to Rockelle's arm. The impact made Rockelle yelp.The fight was fast and brutal. Latrice focused on defense, trying to keep Rockelle away from the portal key.

Rockelle, driven by pure rage, was reckless. Jason watched, horrified. "Stop it,

Rockelle! We need to go!”Rockelle ignored him. She managed to grab a handful of Latrice’s hair, pulling sharply. Latrice cried out in pain but used the momentum to spin, bringing her knee up hard into Rockelle’s stomach.

Rockelle gasped, doubling over, clutching her middle. It was the opening Latrice needed. She shoved Rockelle backward with all her strength, sending her sprawling near the edge of the shimmering gate.Terrell and Wendy saw their chance. “The gate!” Wendy shouted. Latrice rushed back to the light bearing zone , her breath coming in ragged gasps. The gate was humming louder, the window to their world looking impossibly bright.“We have to close it now, before she gets up!” Terrell urged.Latrice reached for the key slot, but Rockelle made one last desperate lunge, crawling toward them. JJ, Rockelle’s henchman, finally moved. He didn't attack the group, though. He looked down at his whimpering leader, then up at the gate, a flicker of independent thought crossing his face for the first time.As Latrice grabbed the key to pull it out and seal the portal, Rockelle grabbed Latrice’s ankle, trying to drag her down.“You won’t leave me here!” Rockelle shrieked.Latrice kicked free, pulling the key out completely. The gate immediately began to destabilize, the bright colors swirling wildly, shrinking rapidly.“Go! Now!” Latrice yelled.Wendy and Terrell jumped through the shrinking opening without hesitation, disappearing into the green light.

Jason hesitated, looking at Rockelle on the ground.“Jason, hurry!” Latrice grabbed his arm and pulled him toward the closing portal. They tumbled through just as the gate slammed shut with a deafening, final *thud*.They landed hard on soft grass under a warm sun. They were safe. Then they heard a muffled cry.They looked back at the spot where the gate had been. The swirling energy was gone, leaving only solid rock. But standing near the spot was JJ. He looked around, bewildered, then spotted the group.He walked slowly toward them, his subservient posture gone. He looked at the solid wall where the portal had been, then back at the four survivors.“She is gone,” JJ stated simply, referring to Rockelle. He looked directly at Jason, then nodded once, a gesture of acceptance or perhaps relief. “I am no longer bound to her. I… I wish to go with you.”Latrice looked at Wendy, Terrell, and Jason. They had escaped Voodalla, but they had brought back a strange new companion. The journey home was over, but a new, uncertain future had just begun.

The Call

It had been a month since the incident at the West End railroad

tracks the chaotic chase that ended the man that Carlos thought ended his brother . Carlos had squared off with a demon named Charles and won, but the memory of that night haunted him for good he wasn’t the say basketball playing, video game loving tuff guy that the neighborhood loved. He couldn't shake the feeling that Charles would return some way somehow, seeking revenge for their previous encounter. Despite his fears the saint was ready for his next match with him, the one thing that mattered most to Carlos was that his brother had returned unharmed.

Saturday morning, as Carlos was getting ready for work at the theater, he received a call from the police department. They informed him that Charles' body was nowhere to be found in the burned wreckage at the railroad tracks. All they had discovered was a charred trench coat. Inside the coat was a set of bones from an unknown species of wolf that they had never seen before.

Carlos felt a chill run down his spine as he processed the information. Could it be possible that Charles had somehow survived the fire and escaped? Or was this a

sign that something even more sinister was at play? As he made his way to the theater, Carlos couldn't shake the feeling of unease that had settled over him. He tried to focus on his work, but his thoughts kept drifting back to the events of that fateful night at the railroad tracks. The memory of Charles' menacing presence and the terrifying power he possessed lingered in his mind like a dark shadow.That evening, as Carlos was closing up the theater, he heard a strange sound coming from the darkened alley behind the building. It was a low, guttural growl so menacing and primal, that it sent a shiver down his spine. He hesitated for a moment, unsure of what to do, but his

curiosity got the better of him and he cautiously made his way towards the source of the noise. He needed confirmation of the inevitable, payback for killing this old evil dude named Charles.As he rounded the corner, Carlos came face to face with a massive black wolf shaggy fur tapered all over it’s body, its gang glossed in the low lighting eyes burning like a cauldron of sulfur. Its fur was jet black and its eyes glowed with a malevolent light a brilliant demonic amber . It bared its sharp teeth in a sinister snarl, sizing him up with a predatory gaze. Carlos' heart pounded in his chest as he realized that this creature was no ordinary wolf it was like the one he had seen before . It was a creature of the supernatural, sent by Charles to exact his revenge. The demon had found a way to return from the depths of hell, taking the form of this monstrous beast.In a moment of sheer terror, Carlos bolted from the alley, the sound of the wolf's pursuit echoing behind him. He ran as fast as his legs could carry him towards the subway station where his car was parked , his breath coming in short, panicked gasps and deep sweats . The streets were deserted, and the only sound was the pounding of his own footsteps and the relentless growls of his pursuer. Since that day he never saw it again but feared that someway somehow it would return.

BONUS RAP SONG

VOODALLA

(Verse 1)

Yo, shadows slither like silk on the walls,

I’m trippin’ through Voodalla where the sanity crawls,

Jason in this maze, pulse jumpin’ like a drum line, Blood-red moonlight, twistin’ up the skyline.

Latrice got eyes that reflect every nightmare, Wendy’s laughter’s like a hex in the stale air,

Terrell’s knuckles white, grip tight on a splintered torch, We’re strangers floatin’ in a bottle, message lost in the gorge.

These trees breathe secrets, roots tangle at my feet, Skulls in the branches, whisperin’ defeat,

Candles flicker glyphs, drippin’ wax on the stones,

Chantin’ tongues that shatter marrow, reach deep in my bones. Every step’s a gamble, feelin’ dice in my lungs,

Walls close like a coffin when the voodoo’s sung, Eyes behind masks, sewn shut with wire,

Limbs dangle from the ceiling, marionettes of desire.

(Chorus)

Lost in Voodalla, where the shadows bite back, Pressure on my chest, hearts beat in pitch black, Trapped with my demons, I’m beggin’ for dawn,

But the sun don’t rise—just more monsters spawned. Voodalla, I’m callin’—can anybody hear?

With Latrice and Wendy, and Terrell gripped with fear, Every second’s borrowed, every breath is raw,

In this cursed land, I’m just bendin’ the law.

(Verse 2)

Wendy’s lips curl, she hums old hymns of despair, Latrice traces scars in the sulfur-

thick air, Terrell’s got jokes but his voice cracks with dread, We’re skeletons dancin’ at the edge of the dead.

Painted faces leer from the cracks in the huts,

Dolls stitched together, spillin’ secrets from their guts, Rivers run backwards, frogs croak prophecies,

Crows gather round, eyes sharp as guillotines.

Every path’s a spiral, keeps spinnin’ me back,

To the start of the nightmare, tied up in pitch black, Sweat drips with regret, prayers caught in my teeth, Can’t trust the reflections, they lie underneath.

Smoke rises in halos, incense of the damned, Feet sink in mud, like I’m drownin’ in hands, Clock tick-ticks backward, eternity for ransom,

I’m writin’ escape routes in blood, call it an anthem.

(Chorus)

Lost in Voodalla, where the shadows bite back, Pressure on my chest, hearts beat in pitch black, Trapped with my demons, I’m beggin’ for dawn,

But the sun don’t rise—just more monsters spawned. Voodalla, I’m callin’—can anybody hear?

With Latrice and Wendy, and Terrell gripped with fear, Every second’s borrowed, every breath is raw,

In this cursed land, I’m just bendin’ the law.

(Bridge)

I see hope in Latrice’s eyes, faint as a match, Wendy clutchin’ rosaries, prayin’ for a scratch, Terrell mutters legends, old prayers in the gloom,

We’re soldiers with no ammo, marchin’ straight into doom. But I’m breakin’ every chain, I ain’t food for these ghouls, Punchin’ holes in the dark, bendin’ all the rules,

Voodalla’s grip tight, but I turn pain to fuel— If I get outta here, I’m bringin’ the truth.

(Outro)

So if you hear my story echo through the trees, Remember my name, and the air

that don’t breathe, Ain’t a witch or a demon that could break my stride, Jason’s still standin’, still alive inside.

Voodalla ain’t nothin’ but an endless abyss, But I carve my initials in the black with a fist, Me, Latrice, Wendy, and Terrell in the mist—

We ain’t ghosts yet, we exist, we resist.

born ready -official rap song -story themed

Born Ready ## Verse 1

Broken watch, tickin’ time, never mind the hour, Every second’s borrowed, city lights devour

Dreams like vultures—skyscrapers shadow my desires, But I’m clawing through the static, sparking live wires. Scuffed shoes, pavement bruised, heart’s a metronome, Every echo in the alley’s got me thinking of home, Barely hanging from a thread, but unravel the dread— I stitch ambition with adrenaline, survive what I bled. Lost in the labyrinth, concrete veins for maps,

Where hope’s sold in capsules, but I’m flipping the traps. Invisible hands try to pull me below,

But I’m a glitch in their system, not a cog in the flow. Can’t dull this edge, I’m the splinter in the granite,

Every setback’s a plot twist, I’m rewriting the canon. Feeding off the hunger, let the struggle baptize me, Born in the shadows but the light’s where I’m rising. ## Hook

I was born ready—ain’t no legend overnight, Underdog in the city where they swallow the light. Every scar’s a receipt that I paid for this fight, Born ready—watch me set the skyline alight.

I was born ready This life is callin me

I got money on my mind, Im running out of time I wanna shine forever.

Verse 2

Hoodie up, stormy mind, dodging daggers in the rain, I turn obstacles to oxygen, pressure into gain.

Billboards selling plastic gods, worshipping the shallow, But I’m mining in the bedrock, veins deeper than Apollo. Tasted every pavement meal, dined on shattered pride, Chewed the grit ‘til the glitter started burning inside.

You can measure out my value by the ghosts in my rearview,

Haunted by the “never”s, but I answer to the “near you.” They bet I’d break—place wagers on my burial,

But I’m the plot twist written in the margins of your cereal. City tried to drown me, but I swim with the sharks,

Turned wounds into wisdom, stitched my name in the dark. No handouts, just hand grenades thrown in my lane,

But I juggle them with laughter, let ‘em rattle my chains. I’m the sum of the struggle, multiplication of pain— Born ready, so remember when you mention my name. ## Hook

I was born ready—ain’t no legend overnight, Underdog in the city where they swallow the light. Every scar’s a receipt that I paid for this fight, Born ready—watch me set the skyline alight.

Bridge

I’m the whisper in the sirens, the pulse in the grid, Every “no” I was given’s just another thing I did.

If survival’s an art, then my canvas is torn, But I painted a future the day I was born.

hook

I was born ready This life is callin me

I got money on my mind, Im running out of time I wanna shine forever.

Outro

So when the city’s asleep and the world’s feeling heavy, Remember my name —'cause I was born ready.